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THE INDIAN CIVIL SERVICE AS A PROFESSION.

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It would be difficult to mention any profession which is so often asserted as the Indian Civil Service is, to be a sure path to great worldly prosperity. Every one has heard of briefless barristers, starving curates, shabby authors; of doctors without patients, of merchants without business, and of soldiers and sailors without promotion. But who ever heard of an Indian civilian who was not rolling in wealth, pomp, and power? Who ever heard the Civil Service of India described except as "the finest service in the world, sir"—the one glorious certainty in the pursuits of civilized life. The Indian civilian is, indeed, to the present age almost what the Indian nabob was to a former age. He is studiously represented as a lazy, luxurious being, in the enjoyment of extravagant pay, and of improper privileges and immunities of all kinds, and with nothing but the dangers of the climate, and the discomforts of expatriation, to mitigate his almost superhuman felicity.

So long as the government of India and the right of nomination to the Civil Service remained in the hands of the directors, these misconceptions could do but little harm. But now that the government has been transferred to the Crown, and the service thrown open to the public, the most serious evils may result from them. They may lead to the unreflecting reduction of Indian civil salaries, and they may induce men to compete for writerships who have no

inclination whatever for such a life as the Indian civilian's actually is. It is surely desirable that, before the salaries are reduced, it should be well understood what the work is by which they are earned; and that, before a youth enters the service, he should know what the service is.

To supply this information is the object of the present paper. We will first sketch the career of a civilian in the North West provinces; then mention the chief incidents of his service; and, lastly, endeavour to place the service in its true rank as a worldly profession. In applying our results to other parts of India, variations of detail will, indeed, be necessary. But they will hold good generally of both the upper and lower provinces of Bengal,—the presidency to which the majority of probationers will probably always be sent, and in which the highest rate of salaries prevails.

On his arrival in India, the new civilian spends his first year in Calcutta, studying two oriental languages. He is now said to be "in college." The college is the college of Fort William, which has degenerated from Lord Wellesley's ideal into an examining board, a library, and a crowd of Moonshes and Pundits. Every student is provided with a Moonshie, with the loan of books, and with about 400*l.* a year pay, which, although it sounds enormous to English ears, is little more than enough to enable the young civilian to keep up his position in so expensive a city as Calcutta. It

would not be easy, however, to justify this item of expenditure in a Committee of Supply. As an educational institution the effect of the college is almost inappreciable. The intellectual qualifications of the examiners are not high. The amount of restraint imposed on the students is not great enough to coerce the frivolous, and is quite sufficient to disgust the ambitious. On the whole, the almost invariable result of his residence in college is to impair the student's health, to damage his morale, to hamper him with debts, to lower his ambition, and to disgust him with Indian life—a heavy price to pay for the perusal of didactic fables about monkeys, mice, and crows, and the superficial acquirement of a scanty vocabulary of pedantic words.

At last, however, the student is reported qualified for the public service, and joins a station as an assistant to the magistrate and collector. In the course of the next two years, he will probably manage to pass two not very formidable examinations; and, being then vested with the full powers of a joint magistrate and deputy collector, he will enter on his career. And here we must do what no ambitious civilian is at all likely to do, confine our view to what is called "the regular line of the service." Of course, every one who is ambitious will determine in his own mind that it is all very well for Brown, Jones, and Robinson to keep in the beaten track. They, poor fellows, will never be fit for anything else! But he, with his rare endowments, will surely leap at once into a snug staff appointment! Did not Lord Metcalfe, he will reflect, attract Lord Wellesley's discerning eye almost as soon as he landed in Calcutta, and pass his time in personal attendance on "the glorious little man," till he entered on his brilliant diplomatic career? Have not A. B. and C. been in the Secretariat or in Council all their service? And shall he, the hero, remain unknown to fame in a Cutcherry, or spend his life as a police-magistrate? But, unfortunately, the whole number of staff appointments in the Bengal service is only about twenty; so that, if forty heroes go out

every year, the great majority of them must perforce remain in the "regular line." Moreover, even assuming that the authorities in the disposal of their patronage adopt, in its integrity, the motto, "*Detur digniori*," we only fall back on Lord Palmerston's question, "What is merit?" Your ideas and my ideas on the point may differ widely; and, even if you would be as fully convinced as I am of my qualifications for a given post, if you knew me as well as I fancy that I know myself, fortune may deny you the knowledge, and may perversely bring to your notice the inferior qualities of Smith or Jones. In India, where civilians are scattered over so large an area, the chances of acquaintanceship play a most important part in the lottery of staff appointments. No Governor-general can be personally acquainted with every civil officer between Calcutta and Peshawur. When he has a good thing to dispose of, he gives it either to a man whom he knows himself, or to a man who is strongly recommended by some one personally known to his excellency. So that the nominee be competent, why should we complain that the post is given only to a competent man, and not to him whom we consider the most competent?

It is best, then, at the outset, to turn our eyes resolutely away from all secretariats, registrarships, and other fat and tempting posts, and to confine ourselves to the regular line of the service where the rank and file must work. The odds are that any given civilian will be kept in that line all his service. An intending candidate, therefore, who feels a distaste for the work of a district officer, would do well to abandon altogether the idea of entering the Indian Civil Service.

After an assistant has passed his two examinations, his duties and powers, for the best part of the next ten years, will remain unaltered. His title will be changed from "Assistant with full powers," to "Joint Magistrate of the Second Grade," and "Joint Magistrate of the First Grade." His pay will be raised contemporaneously to 70*l.* and

100% per mensem. His station, which was, at first, probably one of the most isolated, may very likely be, at last, one of the largest and most attractive in the provinces. But his powers and duties will throughout remain almost unchanged; excepting that, as a young hand, he will of course be more closely watched by his superior officers than in his maturer years.

The usual practice in most districts is to place a portion of the district in the exclusive charge of each civil officer, to whom every application of every description must, in the first instance, be made. Such applications may be divided into those relating to (1) Criminal Justice, (2) Revenue, and (3) Matters of General Territorial Jurisdiction.

The criminal powers of a joint magistrate are identical with those of a magistrate. They extend to awarding thirty stripes, imprisonment with hard labour for three years, and fines of various amount. In all cases in which the specified crime involves a heavier punishment than these, and in all cases in which this amount of punishment seems to be inadequate to the offence, the joint magistrate must commit the prisoner to be tried before the Sessions Judge, by whom also are to be decided all appeals from the orders of the joint magistrate. It would be out of place to discuss here the mode in which criminal justice is administered in India. But it may safely be affirmed, to show the general nature of a civil officer's duties in this branch of his work, that the whole machinery is rude and unreliable in the extreme, and that the mode of taking evidence is eminently calculated to give every encouragement to perjury and equivocation.

The suits in revenue which come before the joint magistrate in his capacity of deputy collector relate chiefly to disputes about the payment of rent by tenants to landholders, and to the appointment of the lowest officials engaged in the collection of revenue. In several classes of cases, which concern more immediately the realization of the government demand, no order can be made except by

the collector. The deputy collector, therefore, when the case comes before him, either forwards it at once to the collector, or investigates it, and sends his opinion to the collector for confirmation. The gravest objections have often been made to Mr. Thomason's revenue system. But they attack merely the general effect of the system, as tending to level the poppies to the rank of the surrounding weeds, and to blend all classes of society in one indiscriminate mediocrity. Be its general tendency, however, what it may, no one who has administered a district under it will deny that, as a system, it is deserving of high praise; that its details have been constructed with a degree of scientific regularity and logical precision that is very rarely met with in India. Revenue cases, indeed, are almost the only cases which a civilian can decide with any satisfaction to himself. In the rules applicable to them, at any rate, there is something definite and clear; and, in this branch of his work, he may occasionally find an intellectual enjoyment in classifying masses of details in subordination to fixed principles, somewhat akin to the delight of an old lawyer in a complicated equity suit.

In dealing with matters relating to the territorial government of the district, the joint magistrate must be careful not to trench on the prerogatives of the magistrate and collector. To the magistrate the district has been entrusted, and to him all matters of importance must be referred.

In the exercise of these powers, the civilian will spend the best part of ten years. Before he is promoted to the next grade, he will probably have completed the first half of his service. His work will lie, in great part, in the administration of criminal justice. And if he does his best with his cases, and is posted in a district of average litigiousness, his duties as a criminal officer will probably occupy him for six or eight hours every week-day, all the year round, excepting a few native holidays, Christmas-day, and Good Friday. Every civilian is indeed entitled to one month

of privilege-leave every year, which may accumulate till it amounts to three months. But this is only granted when the public service will not suffer by its concession. No joint magistrate, therefore, can calculate upon obtaining it.

It must be remembered, too, in connexion with his work in the criminal department, that the mode of investigating cases in India differs in one main point from that in use in England. Here the magistrate or judge takes up a case *ab initio*, and goes on with it until it is finished. But in India the cases are presented piecemeal. One day comes the plaintiff's plaint; next day his deposition; three or four days afterwards the depositions of his witnesses; in a week's time, perhaps, the reply of the defendant; after another interval of three or four days, the depositions for the defence; and, in two or three weeks after the presentation of the plaint, the decision of the magistrate. The magistrate's daily business lies, therefore, for the most part, with the *disiecta membra* of suits; and it is not easy to exaggerate the difficulty of giving due attention to two or three depositions in different stages of each of some half dozen cases, when each case is altogether unconnected with the remainder—one being perhaps a murder; another an assault; a third, a trespass; a fourth, a petty larceny; and so on.

Moreover, this labour is greatly aggravated by the fact that the language of the court is not the language of the magistrate. It may be doubted, indeed, whether, even under the most favourable circumstances, the majority of a thousand educated Englishmen, selected at random, would ever acquire a foreign language sufficiently thoroughly to administer justice in it as satisfactorily as in their own tongue. But the conditions under which Hindustani is employed in India, so far from being favourable to its acquisition, are about the most unfavourable that can be imagined. It is a vague, indefinite, loosely constructed tongue, not easily mapped down in grammars and dictionaries. But it is not the language of Anglo-

Indian society; nor is it ever studied as a living language, because the natives in Calcutta speak Bengalee, and, from the time he leaves college, the civilian is occupied in performing the duties of his office. The result is natural. The technical phrases of the courts are soon acquired, together with the power of giving orders intelligibly. But very few civil officers ever gain anything like a thorough knowledge of the language; and in addition, therefore, to the intrinsic difficulty of the cases they have to decide, is the necessity of performing a perpetual process of translation and retranslation in a tongue very imperfectly understood.

When we remember, also, that, as a revenue and territorial officer, the position of a joint magistrate is purely that of a subordinate—a distinction which the natives mark by calling the magistrate and collector "*Burra Sahib*," or big man, and the joint-magistrate "*Chota Sahib*," or little man—it will be pretty clear that, during the first half of his career, at any rate, actual facts do not afford much ground for the popular idea of the Indian civilian. Up to this point, he is certainly nothing more than a hard-worked, moderately-paid subordinate.

With his promotion to the grade of magistrate and collector, begins the higher part of his career. He now ceases to be a subordinate, and is always a principal. The nature of his work changes accordingly. He has now to exercise a general superintendence over the officers of the district. To his subordinates is entrusted most of the case work in cutcherry; for himself are reserved the higher parts of the revenue administration, the general territorial government, the initiation of all experiments and reforms, and the conduct of all correspondence with higher authorities.

And, doubtless, to a hard-working man, of keen, active mind, fond of exercising responsible power, still enjoying, after his long sojourn in India, anything approaching to what would be called robust health in England, and

satisfied with a salary of 225*l.* a month, in return for the unceasing exercise of all his energies in an Indian climate—few lives would be more attractive than that of the magistrate and collector of a good Indian district. The word “good” must, however, be employed in a somewhat large sense, and imply not only mere physical excellence, such as consists in good air, water, and provisions, or mere excellence of geographical position—that is proximity either to the Grand Trunk Road or to the Hills—but also a well-affected population, yielding pretty easily its assessed revenue; the visitations of a judge not very remarkable for cantankerousness or for want of the faculty of judging; and the rule of a commissioner who is neither a very lazy nor a very dictatorial man.

For it is a peculiarity in our system of Indian Government that it consists of so many checks and balances—of so many *imperia in imperio*—that a junior member of the executive is absolutely at the mercy of any one of his superiors who may be quarrelsome, crotchety, lazy, or impracticable. A Secretary of State may put a Governor-General to open shame; and the same operation may be repeated by his Excellency upon the Lieutenant-Governor; by his Honor upon the Sudder Court, Board of Revenue, and Commissioners under his government; and by any or all of these, and by the judge also, upon the magistrate and collector. India, too, is pre-eminently a country where one would be inclined to give “anything for a quiet life.” One bitter enemy among his superiors could go far towards blighting the peace, and souring the temper of any magistrate.

In his excellent book *Modern India*, Mr. George Campbell gives the following graphic and faithful account of the mode in which a robust, able, and conscientious magistrate and collector passes his time in a tolerably busy district:—

“The chief station of the magistrate and collector is usually near the most

“important town in, and as central as possible to, the district. Here are his head-quarters, and here he spends the season unfavourable for marching, except when emergencies arise. But, from the nature of his duties, it is by no means desirable that he should be stationary; and, every cold season, he goes into camp (as it is called), pitches his tents, leaves the current duties of the chief station with one of his subordinates; and, taking with him a sufficient portion of his establishment, he marches about, pitches for a few days here and a few days there, sees all that is going on, and attends to local matters. His manner of life is a pleasant one, and leads all to take an interest in their work. When he is at head-quarters, his mode of passing his time may be something in this wise. People rise early in India, and ride a great deal; so he is probably out on horseback; but he generally combines business with exercise; he has improvements going on, roads making, bridges building, streets paving, canals cutting, a dispensary, a nursery-garden, &c. &c. He may look in at his jail, and see what work the prisoners are doing, or at his city police-stations to see what is going on there, or canter out upon an out-lying patrol, or go to see the locality of a difficult case. Everyone he meets has something to say to him; for, in India, everyone has, or has had, or is about to have some case, or grievance, or project, or application, of which he seizes every occasion to disburthen himself whenever the magistrate is in sight; and the old woman whose claim to a waterspout was decided against her years ago, but who persists in considering her case the most intolerable in the whole world, takes the opportunity for the hundredth time of seizing his bridle, casting herself under the horse's feet, and clamorously demanding either instant death or a restitution of her rights. Though he has not time to listen to all, he may pick up a good deal from the general tenor of the

¹ *Modern India*, p. 245.

"unceasing fire of language which is directed at him as he passes. He probably knows the principal heads of villages, and merchants, and characters in different lines; and this is the great time for talk with them. If anything of interest is to be discussed, they obtain admittance to his garden, where he sips his cup of tea under his vine and fig-tree on his return from his ride. Then come the reports from the tehseedars and police-inspectors for the previous day; those from the outlying stations having come in during the night. These are all read, and orders briefly recorded; the police-inspector of the town, and perhaps other native officers, may be in attendance with personal explanations or representations; and, all this done, the serishtadar bundles up the papers, and retires to issue the orders passed, and prepare for the regular work in court, while the magistrate goes to breakfast. At breakfast comes the post and packet of official letters. The Commissioner demands explanation on this matter, and transmits a paper of instructions from Government on that; the Judge calls for cases which have been appealed; the Secretary to Government wants some statistical information; the Inspector of Prisons fears that the prisoners are growing too fat; the Commander of the 150th regiment begs to state that his regiment will halt at certain places on certain days, and that he requires a certain quantity of flour, grain, hay, and eggs; Mr. Brown, the indigo-planter, who is in a state of chronic warfare with his next neighbour, has submitted his grievances in six folio sheets, in indifferent English, and a bold hand, and demands instant redress—failing which he threatens the magistrate with government, the supreme court, an aspersion of his honour as a gentleman, a parliamentary impeachment, a letter to the newspapers, and several other things besides. After his breakfast he despatches his public letters, writes reports, examines returns, &c.

"During this time he has probably a succession of semi-official notes from the neighbouring cantonments. There is a great complaint that the villagers have, entirely without provocation, broken the heads of the cavalry grass-cutters; and the grass-cutters are sent to be looked at. He goes out to look at them, but no sooner appears than a shout announces that the villagers are waiting in a body, with a slightly different version of the story, to demand justice against the grass-cutters, who have invaded their grass preserves, despoiled their village, and were with difficulty prevented from murdering the inhabitants. So the case is sent to the joint-magistrate. But there are more notes; some want camels, some carts, some tailors, and all apply to the magistrate. Then there may be natives of rank and condition, who came to pay a serious formal kind of visit, and generally want something; or a chatty native official, who has plenty to say for himself.

"All this despatched, he orders his carriage or umbrella, and goes to cutcherry—his regular court. Here he finds plenty of business; there are police, and revenue, and miscellaneous cases of all sorts, appeals from the orders of his subordinates, charges of corruption or misconduct against native officials. All petitions from all persons are received daily in a box, read, and orders duly passed. Those setting forth good grounds of complaint are filed under proper headings; others are rejected for written reason assigned. At sunset comes his evening drive, which is probably, like his morning ride, mixed up with official and semi-official affairs; and only at dark does the wearied magistrate retire to dinner and to private life."

After some five years thus spent, the magistrate becomes a civil and sessions judge. His salary is now 250*l.* instead of 225*l.* a month; and his duties are, as sessions judge, to try all cases committed by, or appealed from, magistrates,

awarding final sentence where his powers enable him to do so, and committing graver offenders to the Sudder Court; as civil judge, to hear appeals from civil courts and regulate their proceedings, and also to hear, in certain cases, appeals from revenue courts.

When he has got so far on the official ladder, the civilian has no right to further promotion. Nor, as a rule, is further promotion likely to be offered to him much before he has completed the period of twenty-five years' service and twenty-two years' residence, which gives him a legal title to his annuity. In all probability he will then have to choose between returning home, and remaining in India for the chance of obtaining a Commissionership on 3,700*l.*, a seat in the Sudder Court on 4,200*l.*, or a seat at the Revenue Board on 4,800*l.* a year. Except in special cases, no one is permitted to remain in the service more than thirty-five years.

Such, then, is the Indian civilian's career in "the regular line of the service." Throughout, it involves hard, unceasing work. During the first half of it, the civilian enjoys neither wealth nor power; during the next five years, he has but a moderate share of either; as a judge, his powers are limited to the administration of justice, and, although he has the supervision of district courts, he is himself closely watched by the Sudder Court. It is not until he has served for, at least, a quarter of a century that either his pay or his position gives any foundation for the popular idea.

It remains to notice the regulations for furlough and pension. Every civilian is entitled to a furlough of three years on 500*l.* a year, after ten years' residence; to leave, on special grounds, for six months, on half-pay, with retention of appointment; and to leave of absence, on medical certificate, for two years, on half-pay. But in no case is half-pay granted beyond 1,000*l.* a year.

About the pension very erroneous assertions are often made. It is usually said, for instance, that every civilian has a pension of 1,000*l.* a year, after twenty-

five years' service. But this is far from accurate. In the first place, to quote again from Mr. Campbell, civilians "are required to subscribe four per cent. of all pay and allowances; and the accumulated subscriptions, with interest, must amount, or be made up to, half the value of the annuity when the pension is taken. All the subscriptions of those who die in the service, or remain till their contributions exceed the half value, go towards payment of the other half. What remains is contributed by Government: but, on these terms, that contribution certainly does not exceed 300*l.* of the 1,000*l.* annuity. Some indirect advantage is also given in the allowance of six per cent. interest on the contributions, while the public receive only five per cent. for money invested in the funds. The pension given by Government may, therefore, perhaps be taken to be nearly 400*l.* per annum, while the rest is made up by subscriptions on a mutual assurance system." As, however, the scale of subscriptions was calculated for a much higher rate of salaries than exists at present, the gross sum now contributed by civilians of twenty-five years' standing never amounts to anything like the half-value of the annuity. The subscriber must always either take a reduced annuity, or pay from 2,000*l.* to 3,000*l.* in addition to his subscriptions. But, in the second place, twenty-five years' service, and twenty-two years' residence, merely give a legal title to the annuity. In practice, only a certain number of annuities are annually awarded, and they are awarded to applicants according to seniority in the service. As, therefore, the number of men legally entitled to annuities is usually about ten times the number of annuities to be granted, a legally qualified applicant may very possibly apply unsuccessfully for several years.

But, if popular opinion construes the regulations for pension too favourably, it certainly errs, on the other side, in exaggerating the effects of the Indian climate. It would, indeed, be difficult

to exaggerate the amount of discomfort which the climate occasions during three quarters of the year. But, in describing its influence on physical health, it is not unfrequently made the cause of effects with which it has nothing to do. If a man, for instance, eats or drinks to an extent which would be ruinous even in England, and finds his digestion impaired, he straightway denounces "the villainous climate." If he works day and night, leads a sedentary life in badly-ventilated rooms, takes his meals at irregular times, and generally disregards his physical health altogether, he ascribes the indisposition and nervousness which ensue to "the exhausting effects of the climate." The effect of the climate must, of course, depend in some degree, on the temperament and idiosyncrasy of the individual. As a general rule, however, any one who dwells in a well-built and well-ventilated house in a healthy district, who eats and drinks moderately, takes a fair allowance of sleep and exercise, and is habitually cheerful, will probably be as free from actual disease in India as he would have been if he had never left England. The effect of the climate will show itself in a gradual sapping of his strength and energies. But domestic architecture, unfortunately, is still in its infancy in India; and, by a lengthened sojourn in badly-ventilated rooms, the intrinsic injuriousness of the climate may be greatly aggravated.

But it will, perhaps, be urged, even if the work is hard, the pension uncertain, and the climate bad, it surely cannot be denied, that many offices much higher than commissionerships are open to civilians; and that their salaries, if not excessive, are, at least, ample. Both assertions are, to a certain extent, true. In the Bengal Civil Service, there are about half a dozen prizes, varying in salary from 800*l* to 1,800*l*. a year for officers in the first half of their career; about a dozen, varying from 2,500*l*. to 5,000*l*. a year for officers in the second half of their career; and about half a dozen, varying from 6,000*l*. to 10,000*l*. a year, to which civilians are rarely appointed until they have completed

their period of service. It must be borne in mind, however, that most of these appointments involve a residence in Calcutta, with all its attendant discomforts and expenses; and that not one of them is equal in position, and only a Lieutenant-Governorship superior in salary, to the Chief-Justiceship of the Supreme Court. Yet the latter appointment is one which very few barristers in tolerable practice would accept. And, if two men of equal abilities worked for twenty-five years equally hard, one at the English bar, and the other in the Indian Civil Service, the barrister would, it can scarcely be doubted, be much more likely to obtain an Indian judgeship than the civilian to become a lieutenant-governor.

Before considering the second point we must make two preliminary remarks.

It must be remembered, in the first place, that even the youngest civilian is, in some sense, a representative of the crown; that he lives among a race who are peculiarly sensitive to external pomp and circumstance; and that he ought, therefore, to pay much more regard to appearances than he need do at home. In the words of an able and temperate writer—¹

"It must not be imagined that from 800*l*. to 1,200*l*. a year in India can be spent by a young man on two rooms in a lodging house, a couple of good clubs, a riding horse, and one month in the year on the moors or at Homburg. There are many calls on an Indian official's purse which neither frugality nor parsimony can avoid; and much of his salary, even with the most thrifty, passes through his hands by a mere form. The youngest civilian must rent a house, for which he has no choice but to pay what the owner may demand for its occupation. There are perhaps only four houses there which a European *could* inhabit. He would willingly dispense with a number of his servants; but the constitutional indolence and apathy of Asiatics, as well as the convenient laws of caste, which tend to multiply places, forbid this. . . . He must

¹ Fraser's Magazine, Sept. 1856, p. 282.

"keep at least two horses, as well for healthy exercise as for actual efficiency in the performance of his duty.¹ He cannot be backward in charities. This last item is one of which, in England, we have no sort of idea. There is either a school to be supported, or an asylum to be endowed, or a mission to be strengthened, or a charity-hospital failing in funds, or an individual case of indigence and hardship to be redressed. The civil servants, as a body, draw large sums from India; it is right that they should return something to the source whence the sums flow. They are looked at as the representatives of the great British power, that has a name for justice, integrity, and generosity. It is right that, while showing their justice and integrity in courts and offices, they should prove elsewhere their mercy, their generosity, and their kindness. Splendid instances of liberality amongst rich natives are not uncommon; but both rich and poor love the open hand, and bless the liberal donor, and, fond of money themselves, are not given to hoard it up like misers. In their

"eyes, a niggard civilian, without social status, or who was so pinched that he must never join in a subscription, would be a very sorry sight."

In the second place, every civilian ought to be married. There is no text on which the lights of the service are fonder of enlarging than this. To a young arrival in India matrimony is always prescribed by the experienced as the first step in a successful career. It is eminently in accordance with native usage. It is a disgrace to a native of any substance not to have all his sons married by the age of sixteen. Now, every civilian stands, to some extent, in a patriarchal relation to the natives under him; he ought to be, in some sense, "the shepherd of his people;" and he loses, among a race so strongly matrimonial, a great part of the influence he might have, if he remains a bachelor. The commission of matrimony is encouraged by Government by the institution of the Civil Fund, to which is paid a compulsory contribution of two per cent. on the salaries of all bachelors, and of four per cent. on the salaries of all married men. From this fund widows derive an annuity of 300*l.* per annum; and sons and daughters—the one till they are of age, and the other till they are married—an annuity of 100*l.* per annum. Indian civil life, moreover, is peculiarly fitted for the exercise of the domestic virtues. Nowhere are good wives more valued than in Indian stations; nowhere do they play a more important part in their husbands' lives. Indeed, those heroines of fiction who chafe at the monotony and ennui of feminine existence, and fret at the exclusion of women from all scenes of usefulness, could not do better than unite themselves to Indian civilians, in the assurance that the most heroic amongst them would find ample field for her energies and her benevolent aims in sharing the cares, soothing the griefs, and sweetening the home of her overworked husband.

Bearing in mind, then, the position which the civilian has to maintain, and the great advisability of matrimony, let us

¹ The writer seems here to allude to a celebrated dictum that every civilian ought to be able "to go across country." When the competitive system was introduced it was loudly declared that it would surely fail, because bookworms would be found wanting in this important qualification. The late editor of the *Dacca News* ventured to examine the soundness of the assertion. He maintained, not without some show of reason, that, as a matter of theory, the duty of a magistrate was to sit in his court, and not to scour the country like a mounted policeman, and that, as a matter of practice, there were many civilians who were bad horsemen.

As far as my own very limited experience went, it tended to corroborate the editor's views. The civilians with whom I mixed rarely visited the interior of their districts, except in the cold season; and then they went in buggies and dog-carts quite as often as on horseback. Nor, although it would doubtless be of material benefit to many an investigation if the magistrate could conduct it on the spot where the origin of it occurred, can I understand how, in a busy district, time can be found for the rides across country which are so loudly advocated. Of the wholesomeness of equestrian exercise in India there can, however, be no doubt.

consider whether his pay is really exorbitant. As to the amount of his allowances, we can speak with great accuracy; for, when the rumour of Sir Charles Wood's intention of cutting down civil pay reached India, the Bengal civilians drew up a memorial, to which was appended a table, compiled from records in the archives of the Civil Annuity Fund, office, of the gross amount of the subscriptions to the fund, and consequently of the gross amount of the salaries of every civilian who had completed his service during the century. In the cases of men who had served on the present rate of salaries, the average of these amounts was 30,000*l.* Some men had drawn as little as 20,000*l.*, and one had drawn as much as 40,000*l.* Now, surely 30,000*l.* spread over twenty-five years is not a very extravagant remuneration for the work of a district officer. It is difficult to say exactly how much may be saved out of it; but it may safely be asserted that any civilian will be fortunate if, going out to India married, he succeeds in taking his furlough, in paying for his full annuity, in bringing up a family of moderate size, and in saving 10,000*l.* without forgetting the requirements of his position, or remaining in India after he has completed his service. How far from excessive the rate of pay is in the regular line of the service, will become still clearer, if, remembering the price of English labour in India, we contrast the salary drawn by the incumbent of an Indian office with that of a similar official at home. "I think it may fairly 'be estimated,'" says Mr. Campbell, "that European labour in India is at 'least three times as dear as in England,'" and this ratio will probably hold good both of small and large salaries. No man who could earn a subsistence in England would be likely to go out to India on less than three times his English income. And it would certainly require a prospect at least as good to induce the possessor of an English income of 1,500*l.* or 2,000*l.* a year to go out to India. Now, an assistant, with full powers, gets 600*l.*, and a joint

magistrate either 840*l.* or 1,200*l.* a year. But where is the man who, if competent, would be willing, even on 400*l.* a year, to do in England the work which the assistant does in India? The pay of a county-court judge is 1,200*l.* or 1,500*l.* a year; that of a police magistrate about the same; but the assistant exercises more extensive powers than either of them, and works much harder; yet, even when he becomes a judge, he does not draw the equivalent of their pay.

In truth, the more it is considered, the more ill-founded will the outcry against Indian civil salaries appear. If, indeed, it were asserted that the officers themselves were incompetent, the outcry would be intelligible; but no one who knows anything of the *personnel* of the service would venture to make such an assertion. It is universally admitted by all competent witnesses that it would be scarcely possible to find in the world another body of a thousand men so honourable, so hard-working, and so generally efficient as the Indian civilians. It is sometimes objected that the youth of many of the officers is a sufficient reason for not paying them more. But, if a man of five and twenty is as efficient as a man of five and forty, there is no clear reason why, if he has been entrusted with the same work, he should not have the same pay. Nor does any valid objection lie in the alleged fact, that men may be found in the army and in the uncovenanted service who will do the same work sufficiently well on smaller salaries. In the first place, it is by no means established that such men do always work sufficiently well if the character of their work rise above a certain level. But even if this be admitted, what would it prove? Merely that members of another profession, and men without a profession, will, on certain conditions, perform the duties of a given profession for less remuneration than men who have been specially educated to perform those duties, and who have made the performance the business of their lives. If men of the first sort are sufficiently good for the service, the salaries are,

doubtless, far too high ; but, if men of the second sort are required, their pay must bear some proportion to their qualifications, and to the conditions on which they serve. So long as the duties, prospects, and incidents of the Indian civil service remain what they are, no reduction of salaries can ever, it may confidently be maintained, be safely made in the regular line of the service ; and, although one or two staff appointments, especially in the financial department, may, perhaps, be abolished or reduced, it may be reasonably doubted whether the prizes of the service are excessive either in number or in value.

What, then, are the advantages of the Indian Civil Service as a profession ? Most unquestionably, not, as is often said, the great rank, wealth, or power to which it will lead. There is hardly any calling which may not give one or more of these things in a much higher degree. The advantages of the Indian service are, first, the certainty which it affords of a handsome competence. Every member of it is certain of obtaining a salary which in his early years is sufficient to support him, and out of which in his latter years he may save considerably. There are absolutely no blanks in the Indian lottery ; and, if we emphasize service, as distinguished from profession, it is undoubtedly the finest in the world. But, to compensate for this, its prizes are proportionably small ; and, while the minimum is much higher, the maximum of success is much lower in it than in many other callings. The second advantage is the field of usefulness which it opens to young men at a very early age. While his English contemporary is idling in briefless obscurity at the bar, or hopelessly performing the duties of a wretchedly paid curacy, the young Indian civilian is neither idle nor starving ; he is earning a competency by the discharge of onerous duties ; he is exercising judicial powers more extended than belong to barristers of double his age at home ; he is no "boy," or "mere youth," but a self-supporting man. Lastly, the career offers great facilities for matrimony. Instead

of leading a loose, or, at any rate, a discontented and selfish existence, the young civilian has every inducement to marry, and make himself a home.

But, on the other hand, the incidents of the service furnish a formidable list of drawbacks. If we were to call his life extremely "slow," we should give a very inadequate idea of the wearisome monotony of the civilian's existence. Chained to his millstone, he keeps up his eternal round in a land where comfort is unknown, and social pleasure impossible. In six weeks he could get home ; but there he is doomed to toil for the twenty-five best years of his life, under pain, if he resign prematurely, of forfeiting all claim to advantage from the funds to which he has been compelled to subscribe. So rude and unreliable, too, is the machinery for administering criminal justice, and for governing districts, that he cannot feel any confidence in the results of much of his work ; and he is often obliged to adopt a procedure which, to the best of his judgment, is utterly worthless. Moreover, it is absolutely impossible to educate his children in India ; and it is by no means improbable that his wife will also be forced to desert him during at least some portion of his career. In short, unless they be either very anxious to marry, or singularly destitute of the youthful faculty of hope, such candidates as Lord Macaulay expected to compete for Indian appointments would probably prefer life at home, with all its chances, to the life of an Indian civilian. A Fellow of Trinity working at the bar, or in the Church, or in literature, has many sources of enjoyment which an Indian civilian can never hope for ; and he may possibly attain a position which the civilian cannot approach. In one point only can the Indian service present attractions, even to a man who does not fear the severe competition of English life, namely, in what Sir Herbert Edwardes pronounces to be "the great charm of civil employment in the East ;" the fact that "the officer who has a district under his charge has power to better the condition of many thousands."

"The social state of the people," he continues, "is so simple, that his personal influence affects it as rapidly as the changes of the air do the thermometer." If his object in going out to India is to fill such a position as this, even a Fellow of Trinity may, indeed, find the Indian civil service far more attractive than any profession at home; but, if his object be mere worldly success, he will assuredly be disappointed, and

will conclude, with Lord Ellenborough, that the Indian civilian must spend all the best years of his life in one of the most wearing climates in the world, in order to gain less renown for himself, and make less provision for his family, than he might fairly have expected to do if he had entered, with ordinary advantages, one of the English professions.

HOMER AND HIS TRANSLATORS.¹

BY PROFESSOR BLACKIE.

WHY have we so few first-rate poetical translations? For several reasons. *First*, because there is no great demand for them. Those who take a warm interest in any foreign literature generally have acquired that interest by first knowing the foreign language; without the foreign tongue, one not only wants the key to a foreign method of thought, but, for the most part, also the desire to use it. *Second*, because the work of translation, like that of criticism, is more exposed to be undertaken by unqualified persons than almost any other work. When a great poem once gets a name, it is used by everybody, and commented on by everybody, and turned into a thousand shapes by everybody; and what everybody thinks himself entitled to meddle with is very apt to be ill done. But a *third* reason is stronger than these. Translation is really one of the most difficult kinds of literary work; and requires, for a decided success, such a combination of learning, judgment, perseverance, enthusiasm and taste, as is seldom found in the same person. It is quite certain that a first-rate poetical translation is a much more difficult task than a first-rate original composition; not, of course, that Schlegel or Tieck

would have found it more easy to write one of Shakspeare's plays than to translate them (for they could not have written them any more than a barn-fowl could soar like an eagle), but that, given a man with a poetical genius, such as Sir Walter Scott, it is a more easy thing for such a man to compose an original poem, like the "*Lady of the Lake*," than to translate from Sanscrit, Greek, or German, a poem of the same style and dimensions. And why? Just because it is more pleasant and more natural for a mind with a creative power to mould into a living organism its own materials than to accept materials from another; and not only materials, but the translator must accept the form, style, tone, colour of his work, from foreign dictation, and thus is made to feel what are usually called "trammels." Besides, if "glory" have any sound at all to a poetical ear, and the love of praise be potent, it is plain that a man will get more immediate literary reputation by a single original song that happily hits the feeling of the time and place, such as *Am Rhein*, or *Partant pour la Syrie*, than by a whole weighty folio of the most erudite translation. And, if there be little glory often gained by such labour, there is less gain. The booksellers will certainly inform the enterprising young gentleman freshly

¹ On Translating Homer: Three Lectures by Matthew Arnold. London. 1861.

imported from a German university, and full of a noble longing to add his name to the long list of translators of Faust—to such a one the booksellers will certainly say that, of all wares in the paper market, translations and pamphlets are the most unmarketable. But we may add yet a *fourth* reason, peculiar to this country. To translate well upon a large scale requires a certain philosophic and cosmopolitan turn of mind, which, without meaning any offence, it must be candidly admitted that we Englishmen do not possess, or at least have not hitherto shown that we possess in any remarkable degree. Englishmen are Englishmen. John Bull is an energetic character; and it is part of his energy to stamp his own name on everything with which he comes in contact. Now this does very well for conquering India, or blowing Sebastopol to pieces, or cutting out a canal through islands of icebergs within a few hundred miles of the North Pole. Wonderful things of all kinds have been done, and will yet be done, by the potent nationality of this remarkable Bull. But translation is one of the difficult things that will not be achieved in this way. Our world-famous Shakspeare has been called an excellent “adapter;” but the translator will not be allowed to adapt. He must adapt himself; he must be adapted—therein lies the difficulty. If adaptation would do, I imagine the English would be the first translators in the world, for who can deny their rare talent in telling a story, whether in verse or prose? But adaptation produces only what rhetoricians call technically a *rifacimento*—that is, a pudding made of the same flour, but with different plums put into it, and a different seasoning. Of all literary animals at present existing, if the Englishman be one of the best adapters, the German is certainly the most adaptable. No person goes so easily out of himself—which is the first duty of a philosopher and of a translator; therefore the Germans generally are admirable translators, and, though they incline not a little to the extreme

of a certain stiff daguerreotype fidelity, they, at all events, give you the true thing. They give you Homer without a pipe in his mouth; whereas, Homer's heroes, in English hands, have hitherto been made to assume the garb and the gait of that most perfect of all well-bred animals—an English gentleman.

Shall, therefore, the work of translation in this country be given up altogether as a hopeless affair? Far from it! Certain books must be translated, for they belong, like the Bible, not to any particular nation, but to the whole world. Homer is one of these, and Plato is another. Let us see, therefore, in this age, where there is so much expert intellect afloat, whether we may not succeed in laying down some fixed principles in regard to this matter; and, to avoid vague wandering, let us fix our eye on Homer as an intelligible and practicable problem. Why has Homer not been scientifically done into English hitherto? and on what principles are future workmen to proceed in order to insure a success which has been denied to such mighty men as Chapman, and Pope, and Cowper? Professor Arnold has done good service by starting this question in the three ingenious and graceful lectures now generally known; and, though I cannot agree in his conclusions, I think I may succeed in using the grand facts and principles admitted by him as a sure basis of future operations.

The first requisite for the translator of a poet is that himself should be a poet. I do not mean by this that he must necessarily be a great figure among the gods and demigods of poetic reputation; but he must have the poetic temperament; he must be naturally impelled to express his thoughts in rhythm; he must have a natural enjoyment of the luxury of sound, and a curious pleasure in the graceful garniture of thought, and in the elegant setting of a fine idea. In this sense it must be said of a translator as of a poet, *nascitur, non fit*. There is an instinct in the musical use of language which may be improved by training, but cannot be taught by precept. There is a

great deal of common-place poetry published, but even the commonest of the common-place cannot be written mechanically. A primrose is a common flower, but it is a flower with a hue and a fragrance, and every thing that distinguishes a growth from a manufacture. So to the man who has a genuine vocation for translation there belongs a native fervour, glow, and fresh colour of diction, that no trained versifier can approach. The poetical translator, in fact, is a poet in all respects, except in the grand faculty of invention. There must be all the difference betwixt him and the man of prose that there is between a Pegasus and a common horse. The Pegasus has wings, and a common horse has not. Only the Pegasus of the original poet pursues an adventurous flight over untravelled regions, full of beautiful novelty; the Pegasus of the translator repeats the already-made journey in the humble capacity of an admiring imitator. Still he makes a journey which only a Pegasus can make—

“And oars with easy wing through
streams of gusty air” —

which to every four-footed beast—hippopotamus, elephant, or even a lion, king of the forest—is impossible.

But more than this. The successful translator of a poet must not only be a poet himself, but he must be a poet of the same class, and of a kindred inspiration. A “many-sided” Goethe, if the phrase be still fashionable, may translate many things, perhaps all things; but a light, luxurious, sparkling Moore will not translate Æschylus or Dante well; Anacreon is his man, if he will translate, and he has the sense to know it. So the metaphysical Coleridge was a good translator of the metaphysical Schiller; but from that “old heathen,” Goethe, full of Greek realism and Greek sensuousness, he wisely abstained.

Let us now inquire how our most notable translators of Homer stand these two tests. * Hobbes, of course, falls by the first test. No man pretends

that he was in the least a poet by nature, or in any wise of a poetical temperament. The man who translated

ἐκλαγξαν δ' ἄρ' ὕστοι ἐπ' ὤμων χωρόμενοι
into

“His arrows chink as often as he jogs,” was capable of any atrocity. By the same test I am afraid another of our translators, Professor F. W. Newman, must fall. I do not wish to say anything severe of Mr. Newman; not only because he is a personal friend of my own, and a man whom I love and respect with no common reverence, but because he is a man altogether of such fine qualities, of such purity, truthfulness, acuteness, erudition, and various accomplishments, that no man of good feeling would like to fling a stone at him. Nevertheless, I must say what I think of his Homeric workmanship; for, to pass him in silence, would be an affectation, and a wrong done to him as a literary man greater than any sentence of open, manly, though severe criticism. I say, therefore, that Mr. Newman's translation of the *Iliad* is a mistake, for other reasons to be mentioned immediately, but specially for this, that Mr. Newman is not a poet. I don't say this because, so far as I know, Mr. Newman has never published any poetry. “Many are poets who have never penned their inspiration;” and of those who have penned it they are not seldom the wisest who have not published; but I say he is no poet from the internal evidence which his translation affords; for no man could have studiously wandered so far away from the natural graces of poetic diction as he has done in this book, had he been able to claim any natural vocation for writing in verse rather than prose. Those who have read Mr. Newman's prose writings, however they may differ from his religious sentiments, must acknowledge that they bear the stamp of subtle thinking, fine acumen, and pure emotion, adequately and gracefully expressed. They are works which a devout, catholic, and tolerant thinker will always read with pleasure. But his

metrical version of Homer produces quite a different effect. No doubt it bears on every page the visible signs of original thought and subtle observation. But it is written in a style which has neither the sobriety of prose nor the dignity of poetry; a diction which is neither regal purple nor "hoddin-grey;" but a peculiar mixture, manufactured, as he states in the preface, by himself for his own purposes: a mixture which he calls "quaint," but which other Englishmen will be apt to call ridiculous. Such a mistake a man of unquestionable talent has made, by intruding with speculative subtleties into a region where only the living instinct of rhythmical genius has anything to say. But, with all this, his book is a good book; as poetry, indeed null; but, as exhibiting the point of view from which one of the most subtle Englishmen of the nineteenth century contemplates the most remarkable book in the world—after the Bible—it is a valuable production. I, for one, when I am puzzling myself about any knotty passage, never think I have done my work thoroughly till I see what Newman makes of it. Though I cannot always agree with his conclusions, I generally find something suggestive even in his blunders. Most men blunder by ignorance and impudence. Professor Newman, in his translation of the *Iliad*, errs by ingenuity out of place, and erudition not gracefully applied.

As to other translators, all unquestionably poets—ay, and great poets too, some of them—if they have failed, altogether, or partially, it must be by virtue of our second test—that is to say, from want of a proper relationship between the poetic genius of the original and that of the translator. Now, with regard to this, one might be apt to think that a translator would be led by a sure instinct to recognise the author who is kindred to himself in taste and spirit, and whom he therefore has a special vocation to translate. But it is a notorious fact that great mistakes are constantly made in this matter. And this may arise from different causes. The charm of novelty, and the attrac-

tion of contraries, may lead a poet to occupy himself with the translation of an author who is, in some respects, the very reverse of himself; and, in doing this, he will unconsciously interpolate a considerable expression of himself into a writer of an essentially different type, and thus produce an abortion. Such an abortion—a very beautiful one, indeed, but still an abortion—is Shelley's translation of the *Broken Scene* in *Faust*; for Shelley's style was as unlike Goethe's as an *aurora borealis* is to the light of a good domestic fire, or the common light of the common sun. On the other hand, the translator, with every desire to adapt himself to the genius of an admired author, may not know his man—nay, the circumstances of the time and place may be such that it is morally impossible for him to take the true measure of his man. This I take to have been peculiarly the case with Homer. Profound admiration, as much as profound contempt, has a natural virtue to pervert sound judgment. I am persuaded, from a minute examination of many parts of Chapman's Homer, that he has erred in not a few places from too profound an admiration of his great author; and the same feeling has misled both Pope and Cowper to a very considerable extent. Transcendental admiration has always produced nonsense in religion; and in translation it certainly has a tendency to produce the curious bombast which so often grandly defaces Chapman, and the pseudo-sublime into which Pope is so fond of rising. It is quite evident to me that Homer is far too plain and simple a man for the exaggerated ideal of many of his commentators and critics. An amusing instance of this kind I stumbled upon the other day, in the thirteenth book of the *Iliad*, v. 568, where the honest old minstrel, who moved much among farmers, takes a simile from the common process of winnowing "black beans and peas." Now, Pope and Chapman were evidently impressed with far too high a notion of the dignity of the father of classic poetry, to think that such vulgar things as "beans and

peas" — though they might perhaps sound well enough in Greek—could be tolerated in English heroic verse: so Pope has changed the black pulse into "golden grain," and the other has omitted the simile altogether! This mistake, in my opinion, arose not only from a peculiar falseness of style, which belonged both to Queen Anne's poets and to the Elizabethan age, but also and especially from this—that Chapman and Pope had not yet arrived at that period in the evolution of modern thought and feeling, when it was possible for literary men to recognise Homer in his true double character, not only as the father of epic poetry, but as the king of all popular minstrels. If any man in the last century could have recognised this double character, it was Cowper; but Cowper unquestionably did not do so. No doubt he had truthfulness and taste enough to throw away all the brilliant bombast of the Elizabethan dramatist, and the towering tinsel of Queen Anne's chief wit; but the sacred awe of the old translations held his spirit bound so severely, that the simple notes of the shepherd's pipe were often metamorphosed into the grand swell of Milton's organ, before they found full utterance in Cowper's English. Whereas, sublime though Homer can be when he pleases, in his own rapid, flashing, thundering way, he is no more like Milton in his fundamental tone than Pindar is like Robert Burns, or Dante like Walter Scott.

Homer is an *αἰδώς* or popular minstrel, who addressed his narrative songs to the ear of the masses for their amusement—not a *ποιητής*, or modern poetic man of genius, who addresses his epos to the cultivated understanding and the polished taste of the reading public, or, it may be, only a small fraction of that public. This truth must be admitted, and its significance known and felt, before a single step can be taken towards a translation of Homer in the spirit in which Homer was written. As to a mere *rifacimento* of it in a modern shape, to which a writer in the June number of *Fraser* seems to point as a

desideratum, that may be all very well. Let every age tell the famous old story after its own fashion, if it pleases. Pope did it pretty well, or rather very well, for his own age; let Tennyson or Kingsley do it for our age, if they can find nothing better to do; but a regular translation of Homer, as good in its way as Coleridge's version of *Wallenstein*, will justly be demanded by the British public; and there is no lack of active, adventurous literary talent in the country, to meet the demand. But whoever essays to do this important work, must not commence, as Professor Arnold seems inclined to do, by flinging Frederick Augustus Wolf and the German ballad-theory altogether overboard. The truth which lies at the bottom of that theory is altogether independent of the critical extravagancies which have been worked out of it by a class of one-eyed, operose Germans, who can never do anything without overdoing it. Every great discovery is apt to drive the discoverer mad, in the first place; and, after that, to raise up a legion of mad disciples—mad, however, in this second stage, without genius—who hymn poems upon his grave, till the world becomes sick of the "damnable iteration," and bolts back again into its original position. But the matter may not settle here. The third move is the sober intelligent recognition of the discovery without the madness; and this move I believe the best part of the literary mind of England has clearly made or is making; though I must confess, I am extremely sorry to find Mr. Grote, in his second volume, advocating the "no Homer" extravagance of the ultra-Wolfians; while Mure, Gladstone and Arnold certainly do not seem at all adequately impressed with the importance of the ballad element in the Homeric poems. But Homer is a ballad-singer, at once in respect of his materials, of his tone, and his method of handling; only he rises above all ballad-singers in the vividness of his genius, in the grandeur of his conceptions, and in the constructiveness of his intellect. By virtue of these qualities, he raised his

ballads into the culminating position of the popular Epos ; a feat which it required a Homer to perform, in like manner as it required a divine power to make the world.

This great principle being laid down—we shall have no difficulty in seeing the real nature of some of the most striking mistakes made in our translations of that great work. As already said, we fail in simplicity ; we take our mouth too full, we stalk in buskins, we blow trumpets. We are always aiming at artistic artificial effects of which Homer had no conception. Not that Homer was altogether artless : on the contrary, he was a master of art ; but it was the art of a minstrel ; the art of a man who told, or rather sang, a pleasant story to the people. Therefore he never deals in curt sentences, in condensed thoughts, in brilliant antitheses, in subtle and curious setting of words. He is continually committing careless sins, which would bring down upon any poor modern rhymers the lash of the keen-eyed critic with most effective demonstration. Professor Newman saw this clearly, and deserves credit for having boldly stated it. "The style of "Homer," says he, "is direct, popular, forcible, quaint, flowing, garrulous, abounding with formulas, redundant in particles and affirmatory interjections, as also in grammatical connectives of time, place, and argument. In all these respects it is similar to the old English ballad, and is in sharp contrast to the polished style of Pope, Sotheby, and Cowper." With all this I agree, except one word—Homer is not *quaint*. The Elizabethan writers are often quaint ; Chapman is studded over with quaint fancies, fine conceits, and blazing affectations : but Homer is altogether remote from anything of the kind. This absence of the brilliant tricks of accomplished art seems, indeed, to be the grand generic characteristic which distinguishes all popular poetry from productions addressed by literary men to a literary age.

But let us not do injustice to such men as Chapman, Pope, and Cowper, by bringing only their faults into the fore-

ground. Each of them has familiarised the English ear with some one element of Homer's rich muse in such a masterly fashion that he who comes after must sweat hardly, if he desires to surpass or even to reach his predecessor, in his own peculiar walk. For real lusty vigour, and sturdy snatches of grand conception such as only an Elizabethan Englishman knew how to make, Chapman will always stand unrivalled ; in these points he is as finely Homeric as he is English. For grand roll, rapid dash, and sounding fulness of verse, Pope surpasses Chapman as much as in rude vigour he falls behind ; and, by virtue of this quality, though less effective in single passages, as a whole he is much more enjoyable, and more easily digested than the Elizabethan. I cannot help thinking, indeed, that it has been too much the fashion lately, both to over-rate Chapman, and to under-rate Pope. I never could see that Chapman's offences not only against the manner of Homer, but against all principles of good taste, are a whit less gross than Pope's ; while I am quite certain that, except to a man bitten with a regular Elizabethan mania, Chapman is not at all a pleasurable translator to read. If his Muse rides in a very magnificent chariot, she certainly jolts on a very rough road. Now, of all vices of poetical composition, this is that which is at once most disagreeable to the general reader, and most opposed to what is most prominent both in the language which Homer used, and to the style in which he used it. What scholar is not familiar with the sonorous vocal swell of the line—

δεινὴ δὲ κλαγγὴ γένητ' ἀργυρέοιο βιοῖο,

or,

Τρώων ἱπποδάμων καὶ Ἀχαιῶν χαλκοχι-
τῶνων,

or,

ἐν πεδίῳ ὀλοῖο λιλαιόμενοι πολέμοιο,

or,

κίματα παφλάζοντα πολυφλοίσβοιο θα-
λάσσης.

The man who has an ear to enjoy such luxury of vocal music in rhythmic speech will almost always prefer

Pope to Chapman, in passages where the sense does not so grandly overtop the sound that the latter is altogether subordinated.

The great excellence of Cowper lies in his avoidance of the grand faults of his two great predecessors: when they are turgid, bombastical, and bespangled with artificial conceits, he is always chaste, simple, natural, and at the same time dignified. But he wants fire and rapidity—a very great defect in the popular epos, and very un-Homeric—nor can he pretend to equal Pope in sound, or Chapman in vigour. In the “Odyssey” his quiet manner is more at home, and his translation of that work is perhaps the best version of any Homeric poem existing in the English language.

Of Sotheby and Wright I have little to say. The former I have not examined accurately; but, so far as I know it, I was strongly impressed with the feeling that, being conceived mainly in the style and manner of Pope, and not being characteristically different from him, it made no change in the position of the English mind in reference to the great original, and therefore, as a literary achievement, was unnecessary and ineffective. Wright, again, I have minutely examined; and he stands exactly in the same relation to Cowper that Sotheby stands to Pope. His manner strikes you in the main as exactly Cowper’s; and, while in some passages he excels, in others he falls beneath that great writer. On the whole, therefore, I do not think, that this most recent translator has made any decided advance on his predecessors. His translation is an extremely careful, judicious, tasteful, and good piece of workmanship: but it fails in giving the English reader a new and striking impression of the original.

These remarks on the existing translations, if well founded, contain something that will go a considerable way in enabling us to decide the great question which Professor Arnold has placed before us—if we are to have another poetical version of Homer, in what measure ought that version to be made? Now a practical eye will at

once see here that it would be wise at least to try something new. Assuming that our heroic blank verse were the right method (which, however, I am far from imagining), and that Tennyson, or Kingsley, might give us an English Homer in that measure, which would be extremely enjoyable for many reasons, this is no reason why a translator generally should imitate Mr. Wright, throw away the grand advantage of novelty, and insist on occupying a position which has been already so creditably maintained by one of our greatest poets. But there are other, and very weighty, reasons against the use of blank verse. The peculiar character of that measure is weight, massiveness, stateliness and gravity. Not that every writer of blank verse must set up Milton as his model. We may write blank verse with a genial, careless ease, as Mrs. Browning did in “Aurora Leigh,” or with a curious, graceful, subtle ease, as Tennyson does in the “Idylls.” But none of these varieties are at all Homeric; they all want rapidity and they want sound; when you come to the rolling stone, the flooded river, the roaring storm, and the tumbling wave, Pope will beat them all, you may depend upon it. And why will Pope beat them all? Perhaps for several reasons; but certainly for this one—because he rhymes. And in favour of rhyme, that good old English luxury—that happy modern invention—I must here, before proceeding further, put in a strong plea,—partly because it is the fashion, in certain quarters, to talk cheaply of it; partly because Professor Arnold most unhandsonely disowns it; and partly because I am certain that no translation of Homer, however well executed, will have any chance of popularity without it. The general argument in favour of rhyme is so strong that it may be regarded as forming a *prima facie* case for its adoption in any English poem, where special weighty reasons do not establish an exception. Rhyme is English; it belongs to the habit of the English ear; it is an additional vocal

luxury ; it is an additional proof of artistic skill ; and, when well used, is a powerful instrument of emphasis and effect. By far the greater number of popular English poems—not being dramas—are rhymed ; those that are otherwise owe their success to some compensating element, that renders the want of the favourite rhythmical ornament less noticed. As to the special case of translations from the classical languages, some persons have an idea that rhyme, being altogether a modern invention, suits as little with the massive simplicity of the antique, as the flosculosities of Gothic ornamentation would accord with the plain majesty of a Doric temple. But the case is quite otherwise. It is the English language that is bald ; the Greek that is redundant with ornament. Therefore, in order to give any impression of the vocal luxuriance of Homer, we must not rashly throw away the greatest instrument of musical effect which our poetical language supplies. We must take our language as we find it. If the richness of majestic spondees and dactyls may not be ours, we must see to it, at least, that we use wisely the compensating element which we have, in the sonorous emphasis of well chosen and judiciously varied rhymes. Nay more ; it is a certain fact that Homer himself rhymes. I do not mean by this that there occur in his poems accidental instances, not unfrequent, of two lines ending with the same sound—but what I mean is, that any language, like Greek, Latin, and Sanscrit, that makes a free and full use of flexional terminations, must rhyme, and is, in fact, always rhyming, by the natural force of these terminations. The three first lines quoted above, page 273, supply abundant illustrations of this remark. The essence of a rhyme is a recurrent sound ; and its peculiar effect will be produced, and is produced often in Homer, though this recurrence does not take place at the end of the line. Now, in our own ballad measure, nothing is more common than to introduce this rhyme in the mid-

dle of the verse, in such a way as to make the fourth syllable rhyme with the eighth. This natural musical device of the English ballad style, is essentially Homeric ; and yet we shall be told, by certain classical transcendentalists, that all rhyme is a modern impertinence, which cannot be imposed upon Horace or Homer without profanation ! In these, as in more serious matters, the letter killeth, the spirit only maketh alive.

There are only two other objections which have been made to rhyme that deserve any consideration. One we shall give in the words of Professor Newman, the other in the words of Professor Arnold :—"The exigencies of "rhyme," says the former gentleman, "positively forbid *faithfulness*." The answer to this is plain. Literal faithfulness is not the business of any poetical translator, or, indeed, of any good translation at all ; and for this very plain reason, that poetical translation is not a process of mechanical transference, but of refusion and reconstruction. What we want in a poetical translation is not the verbal equivalent of each word, but the reproduction of the æsthetic tone and character, so far as that is possible. For those who are curiously anxious about verbal faithfulness, a prose translation should be made with every superfluous word in *italics*, that the conscientious quoter may know what he is about. In a book like the Bible, for obvious reasons, such a method is absolutely necessary. But what we want in poetry is not the exact transference of the matter, but the reproduction of the style ; the *how* in all poetry, as Goethe said, being infinitely more important than the *what*. One of Burns's songs, or Beranger's, translated into English prose faithfully, would look very stupid—might, perhaps, be a very exact piece of workmanship, and yet be as like the original as dancing is to walking. The Germans have produced not a few abortions of so-called poetical translations, from this misapplied rage for verbal faithfulness ; but the vigorous sense of the English mind, represented by such masters as Dryden,

Chapman, Pope, Fairfax, Cowper, Martin, and others, has hitherto kept us free from any such painful absurdities. As to Professor Arnold, his objection to rhyme, in the case of Homer, is more ingenious, though, unfortunately, not more sound. The real objection to rhyme, he says, is, that it separates what naturally goes together. The answer to this is twofold. The basis of the Homeric rhythm, as of all popular poetry, is the couplet. This remark has appeared strange to many persons to whom I have made it, but there is nothing more certain. It is seen in a thousand places, but we shall quote the following six lines of the twenty-fourth book, as they happen to turn up, v. 671—676 :

Ὡς ἄρα φωνήσας ἐπὶ καρπῷ χεῖρα γέροντος
ἔλλαβε δεξιτερὴν, μήπως δαίσει· ἐνὶ θυμῷ.
οἱ μὲν ἄρ' ἐν προδόμῳ δόμου αὐτόθι κοιμήσαντο,
κῆρυξ καὶ Πριάμος, πυκινὰ φρεσὶ μῆδ' ἔχοντες.
αὐτὰρ Ἀχιλλεὺς εἶδε μυχῷ κλισίης ἐκπύκτου·
τῷ δ' ἄρ' Βρισηΐς παρελέξτο καλλιπάρῃος.

In verses so constructed it is plain that rhyme, which gives a couplet a more natural completeness, is not only not a blemish, but a great beauty—a decoration, as the architects say, growing out of the construction. But Homer was too great a genius to confine himself to the constant repetition of the simple couplet, in the wearisome way in which that simplest style of composition occurs in the modern Romaic ballads. He varies his rhythm constantly with the triplet; and, when passion rises high and fierce, he knows how to override and overbrim the natural boundaries of his verse in a manner which, so far as I know, he alone, of all popular minstrels, has achieved. Now, as to the frequently recurring case of the triplet, to a man using Pope's couplet, it presents no difficulty at all; for he will naturally turn it into two couplets, and thus preserve complete unity of effect, though in a different way. As little difficulty ought

Chapman to have found with his long line, had he known how to handle it for Homeric purposes; for he would have been wise generally to translate line for line, and then the triplet is as easy and as complete in English as in Greek. Take an example. The first seven lines of the seventh book of the Iliad are as follows :—

Ὡς εἰπὼν πυλίων ἐξέσσυτο φαίδιμος
Ἑκτωρ.
τῷ δ' αἶμ' Ἀλέξανδρος κ' ἀδελφεός· ἐν
δ' ἄρα θυμῷ
ἀμφότεροι μέμασαν πολεμίζειν ἠδὲ μάχεσθαι.
ὥς δὲ θεὸς ναύτησιν ἐλδομένοισιν ἔδωκεν
οὔρον, ἐπὶν κεκάμωσιν εὐξέστης ἐλάτῃσιν,
πόντον ἐλαίνοντες, καμᾶτ' δ' ὑπὸ γούνα
λέλυνται.
ὥς ἄρα τῷ Τρώεσσιν ἐλδομένοισι φανήτην.

These Chapman renders thus :—

"This said, brave Hector through the
ports, with Troy's base cringing
knight,
Made issue to the insatiate field, re-
solved to fervent fight.
And as the weather-wielder sends to
seamen prosperous gales,
When with their sallow polished oars,
long lifted from their falls,
Their wearied arms, dissolved with toil,
can scarce strike one stroke more;
Like those sweet winds appeared those
lords to Trojans tired before."

In reference to which version Professor Arnold would say, that the fourth, fifth, and sixth lines, which have a compact unity in the Greek, are drawn out of their coherence by the rhyme in the sixth line, and made to belong to what follows, rather than to what goes before. Well, admitting this to be a serious objection, what workman that knows how to use his tools would find any difficulty in giving a fair impression of the whole rhythmical movement of the original, as follows :—

"Thus saying, through the city gates
the noble Hector goes,
And godlike Paris by his side; with
eager ardour glows

The heart of each to lead the ranks,
and man with man to close.

As when seafaring men long time have
smote the sounding seas

With the smooth oars, and now no
bond of strength is in their knees,
When to their longing hearts a god
sends forth the favouring breeze ;
So to the Trojans' longing hearts this
noble pair appeared."

So much for the triplets. As for those cases in which the swelling passion of the poet boldly overbrims the vase, and runs violently over into the following line ; we see no reason why an English translator should not practise this as adroitly, as it is as constantly practised by Ariosto, within the narrow bounds of his *ottava rima*, or by Byron, in the grand use which he makes of the Spenserian stanza. Of all offences the translator of a long poem should be most anxious to avoid monotony.

These observations on rhyme have brought us quite close to what appears to me to be the just conclusion of the whole argument—that a new translation of Homer should be attempted in some of our well-known ballad measures.¹ The reasons in favour of this are obvious. It possesses rhyme, and that with much greater richness, than the heroic couplet ; it has rapidity and variety ; and, above all, it brings with it the very characteristic minstrel element, which has hitherto been so unfortunately ignored in the translation of the great father of all minstrels. It has (certain forms of it at least) the immense advantage of being able to render Homer line for line, generally without unnatural condensation on the one hand, or verbose expansion on the other. That it may be handled in a loose slipshod way, and even with a protrusion of vulgarities, is quite plain ; but Professor Arnold is quite one-sided in supposing that there is anything necessarily vulgar in the mere form of the ballad. Locksley Hall is in ballad measure—the less

common Trochaic variety indeed, but still ballad ;—and no person ever accused Mr. Tennyson's Muse of vulgarity in any shape. Or take, if you please, the following lines, into which Mr. Martin has, with so much spirit, transfused the rapid Galliambs of Catullus, and say whether you find a want of nobleness there ?

"Away, away, pursue your prey ! scare,
scare him back in cold affright,
Back to the woods, the wretch that spurns
my service, and that scorns my might !
Lash, lash, thy flanks, with furious roar
shake terror from thy shaggy mane,
Away, Away ! She ceased, and flung
upon his neck the loosen'd rein."

A more difficult question it certainly is which of our many fine ballad measures would be most suitable for Homer. Walter Scott's verse is not deficient in ease, flow, rapidity, and, when well-handled, variety ; it has also a genuine, healthy, sunny tone, at once thoroughly Greek, thoroughly Homeric, and very characteristic of minstrel poetry ; and, on the whole, what Professor Newman says is unquestionably true, that "Walter Scott is the most Homeric of our British poets." But the objection made to this rhythm, by many persons, that it is too short, and wants dignity, seems not altogether unfounded. It may seem a strange thing, but so it is, that in poetry, as in architecture, a great deal depends on mere magnitude and compass. As no person could imagine the severe, slow, thoughtful *terza rima* of Dante, done with its natural effect into the short Anacreontic measure of "*θέλω λέγειν Ἀτρείδης*," so one feels a sort of descent, as from a king's throne to a common chair, when the stately march of the

Μῆνιν ἄειδε, θεά, Πηληϊάδεω Ἀχιλῆος,

is changed into what appears to our ears the light familiar trip of

The direful wrath, O goddess sing,
Of Peleus' son, the Jove-born king,
The wrath from which uncounted woes
To all the host of Greece arose, &c.—

¹ In this conclusion we are happy to find that the author of an excellent article in the *National Review* (October, 1860) agrees.

It must also be considered that a long line of a certain magnitude always offers a greater variety of pause than a short line ; and this alone would determine me in favour of Chapman's line of fourteen syllables rather than Walter Scott's octo-syllabic couplet, varied as that unquestionably was by the easy play of his strong and graceful genius. Chapman's measure has, besides, the immense advantage, already mentioned, of corresponding generally, line for line, to the original ; for, though a constant mechanical observance of any such rule will never be tolerated by a man of real genius, it is unquestionable that the choice of a line of corresponding compass is the only sure safeguard against the great temptation to which a translator is always exposed of unduly condensing, or immoderately expanding, his materials. Of both offences Pope and Chapman afford abundant examples : Pope, because his verse forced it upon him ; Chapman, because he did not handle the ballad measure as a ballad measure in any sense, and, though he uses rhyme, never seems in the least solicitous that the couplet, the natural product of rhyme, should strike the ear of the reader. On the contrary, he continually breaks up his rhymed verse by the freely-varied pauses which belong to blank verse : and this is one cause of the great want of musical flow which characterizes his work. But though, on the whole, I think the old verse of Chapman, handled with a real ballad feeling, and at the same time with dignity, is the most convenient medium for presenting the real old Homer to English readers, I see no reason why other measures of the same class should not succeed in the hands of a master. Professor Aytoun, in *Blackwood's Magazine*, for 1839, favoured us with a book of Homer in the measure of Locksley Hall ; and there seems no reason why what was done successfully with one book might not be done with the whole poem. Certainly the Trochaic measure possesses both rapidity and dignity ; it is not so common as the Iambic, and, therefore, more majestic, not only in its native movement but in the accidental

associations of the English ear. Nevertheless there can be no doubt of the philological fact, that Iambic is the natural rhythm of the English language, and the rhythm which has been used with the greatest success by all our great poets. There is no English poem that I know of any length written in Trochaic verse, except *Hiawatha*. The man who writes Iambic verse in English always follows more the natural movement of the language, and, with a moderate amount of genius, is more sure of success. Lord Byron, who was a great genius, but, at the same time, a thorough Englishman, almost always wrote Iambic verse, and generally rhymed.

A single word, in conclusion, on English hexameters. I regard them as excluded from the present question from the one plain, practical consideration, that English versions of Latin and Greek poems are not made for the curious amusement of academical ears, but for the entertainment and instruction of the unlearned. A translator is not in a position to dictate to the popular ear, and to attempt to mould it to the movement of any foreign rhythm to which he, in the course of his private studies, may have attuned his organ. Whatever be the virtue of English hexameters, they are, in English poetry, a great and a daring innovation ; and, so far as they have been tried yet, have found nine gainsayers for one approver. But, if they would succeed, they must be tried under the auspices of some great, original genius. Even in erudite and cosmopolitan Germany they never could have succeeded as a recognised form of classical translation, had not Klopstock first, and then Goethe, added the stamp of native authority to the importation. But, besides this, it may be proved scientifically that English hexameters naturally have not, and never can have, to the English ear, that *μεγαλοπρεπής*, or weighty majesty, which the ancient critics recognised in the sounding march of Homeric and Virgilian verse. In fact, an ancient hexameter was really, according to musical laws, a *march* ; ours is

rather a jig. On this subject I wrote a paper, several years ago, in the *Classical Museum* (vol. iv. p. 320), which those who are curious in such matters may consult.

One thing remains. Professor Arnold, in the ingenious, graceful, and thoughtful little book, which has given occasion to these critical remarks, showed a good example to all critics by giving a specimen of the sort of hexameters into which he was of opinion that Homer

should be translated. I should consider myself somewhat of a sneak if after having commented so freely on his opinions, I should not follow his practice. Here, therefore, I fling down for his critical dissection and disapproval—for I cannot expect him to approve of my ballad measure any more than I do of his hexameters—the well-known smart interlude between Ulysses and Thersites, in the second book of the *Iliad*.

ILIAD II. 211—245.

Now all the rest in order formed in subject silence sate ;
 Only Thersites lawless stormed with never-ending prate,
 Words words, he knew : rash reckless words about him now he flings,
 Nor aught abates, but fiercely rates the Jove-descended kings ;
 Content if he might laughter move with ribald jest : the most
 Ill-favoured wight I ween was he of all the Grecian host.
 With hideous squint the railer leer'd : on one foot he was lame ;
 Forward before his narrow chest his hunching shoulders came ;
 Slanting and sharp his forehead rose, with shreds of meagre hair ;
 He to Laertes' godlike son a deadly hatred bare,
 And to Achilles : Agamemnon now this railer seeks
 And brays his shrill reproaches out ; but not the well-greaved Greeks
 Might love the man whose tongue defied the Jove-born king of men :
 Thus clamouring loud Thersites cried to Agamemnon then ;
 O son of Atreus ! what new greed doth now thy rage inspire ?
 Thy tents are full of copper bright : to glut thy heart's desire,
 The fairest fair are still thy share ; the cream of every joy,
 With glowing lip the king shall sip, when the Greeks have taken Troy.
 Or lusts thy heart for yellow gold, which, to redeem his boy,
 Some horse-subduing father bold may bring to thee from Troy,
 Whose son by me was captive led, or by some other hand
 Of valiant Greek : or doth thy lust some damsel fair demand
 In amorous joy with her to toy ? O 'tis most seemly so,
 That their own Greek king to the Greeks should bring more harm than to the foe !
 Soft-hearted Greeks, women, not men ! if truth may pierce your ear !
 Come sail with me across the sea, and leave this monarch here,
 Alone in Troy to glean his joy, and to digest his prey,
 When we who fight to swell his might, are gone and far away.
 The son divine of Peleus' line, a better man by far,
 He thus defies, and takes the prize, his brave hands won in war.
 Soothly Achilles lacketh gall, and droops his princely wing,
 Or this were the last of insults, cast from the lips of this faithless king !
 Such reckless words Thersites dared from venom'd heart to fling
 Against the monarch ; but Ulysses darkly-scowling came,
 And swift pursued the railer rude with words of bitter blame.

Thersites, sense-confounding fool, thy mouth of fluent prate
 Learn now to gag : against the kings this ribald talk abate !
 I tell thee true, of all the crew from Greece to Troy that came,
 Vilest art thou : there breathes not one, who owns a fouler fame !
 Such a base mouth it well beseems with bitter froth to foam,
 To point sharp stings against the kings, and talk of sailing home !
 Fool ! the deep sea more danger keeps than the shallow sounding shore ;
 Thou dost not know what weal or woe the Olympians have in store
 For the returning Greeks. But here thou sittest and dost pour
 'Gainst the Atridans floods of bile, because we honor most
 Him who is shepherd of the folk, and first of all the host.
 But mark me this : and the sure deed will follow what I say !
 If I shall find thee fooling here, as thou hast fooled to-day,
 Another time, let not my head upon my shoulders stand,
 Nor I, Telemachus' father, rule the rocky Ithacan land,
 If I shall fail to strip the rags from thy ill-favoured frame,
 Cloak, coat, and vest, and to the gazing crowd expose thy shame ;
 Then send thee hence mid shouts immense, and many a sturdy blow,
 To vent thy wail without avail, where the salt sea-waters flow !
 He spoke : and o'er the craven's hunch, with sharp stroke and severe,
 His sceptre came : Thersites winced ; forth flowed the bitter tear
 From his vexed eye ; a bloody bruise did on his back appear
 Beneath the golden studded mace : he sate in blank dismay,
 And with a stupid gaze looked round, and wiped the tear away.
 His plight the folk with pity saw, yet laughed with laughter loud ;
 Then one to his neighbour turned, and thus outspoke amid the crowd :
 O, bravely ! bravely ! many a deed Laertes' godlike son
 In council, and in battle bold, of brave repute hath done !
 But now the chief his praise hath topped with the bravest deed of all,
 When he this eager babbler stopt that did so rudely brawl,
 Till sure, I ween, his tongue will spare a second time to encroach
 On the high virtue of the kings with words of foul reproach.

Edinburgh, July, 1860.

JOHN STUART BLACKIE.

NOTE.—I do not admit Butmann's identification of *φολαδς* with the Latin *vulgus*.

RAVENSHOE.

BY HENRY KINGSLEY, AUTHOR OF "GEOFFRY HAMLYN."

CHAPTER XXVI,

THE GRAND CRASH.

THE funeral was over. Charles had waited with poor weeping Mary to see the coffin carried away under the dark grim archway of the vault, and had tried to comfort her who would not be comforted. And, when the last wild wail of the organ had died away, and all the

dark figures but they two had withdrawn from the chapel, there stood those two poor orphans alone together.

It was all over, and they began for the first time to realize it ; they began to feel what they had lost. King Denzil was dead and King Cuthbert reigned. When a prime minister dies the world is shaken ; when a county member dies the county is agitated, and the

opposition electors, till lately insignificant, rise suddenly into importance, and the possible new members are suddenly great men. So, when a mere country gentleman dies, the head of a great family dies, relations are changed entirely between some score or so of persons. The dog of to-day is not the dog of yesterday. Servants are agitated, and remember themselves of old impertinences, and tremble. Farmers wonder what the new Squire's first move will be. Perhaps, even the old hound wonders whether he is to keep his old place by the fire or no, and younger brothers bite their nails and wonder too about many things.

Charles wondered profoundly in his own room that afternoon, whither he retired after having dismissed Mary at her door with a kiss. In spite of his grief he wondered what was coming, and tried to persuade himself that he didn't care. From this state of mind he was aroused by William, who told him that Lord Segur was going and Lord Saltire with him, and that the latter wanted to speak to him.

Lord Saltire had his foot on the step of the carriage. "Charles, my dear boy," he said, "the moment things are settled come to me at Segur Castle. Lord Segur wants you to come and stay there while I am there."

Lord Segur from the carriage hoped Charles would come and see them at once.

"And mind, you know," said Lord Saltire, "that you don't do anything without consulting me. Let the little bird pack off to Lady Ascot's and help to blow up the grooms. Don't let her stay moping here. Now, good-bye, my dear boy. I shall see you in a day or so."

And so the old man was gone. And, as Charles watched the carriage, he saw the sleek grey head thrust from the window and the great white hand waved to him. He never forgot that glimpse of the grey head and the white hand, and he never will.

A servant came up to him, and asked him, Would he see Mr. Ravenshoe in the

library? Charles answered yes, but was in no hurry to go. So he stood a little longer on the terrace, watching the bright sea, and the gulls, and the distant island. Then he turned into the darkened house again, and walked slowly towards the library door.

Some one else stood in the passage—it was William, with his hand on the handle of the door.

"I waited for you, Master Charles," he said; "they have sent for me too. Now you will hear something to your advantage."

"I care not," said Charles, and they went in.

Once, in lands far away, there was a sailor lad, a good-humoured, good-looking, thoughtless fellow, who lived alongside of me, and with whom I was always joking. We had a great liking for one another. I left him at the shaft's mouth at two o'clock one summer's day, roaring with laughter at a story I had told him; and at half-past five I was helping to wind up the shattered corpse, which when alive had borne his name. A flake of gravel had come down from the roof of the drive and killed him, and his laughing and story-telling were over for ever. How terrible these true stories are! Why do I tell this one? Because, whenever I think of this poor lad's death, I find myself not thinking of the ghastly thing that came swinging up out of the darkness into the summer air, but of the poor fellow as he was the morning before. I try to think how he looked, as leaning against the windlass, with the forest behind and the mountains beyond, and if, in word or look, he gave any sign of his coming fate before he went gaily down into his tomb.

So it was with Charles Ravenshoe. He remembers part of the scene that followed perfectly well; but he tries more than all to recall how Cuthbert looked, and how Mackworth looked before the terrible words were spoken. After it was all over he remembers, he tells me, every trifling incident well. But his memory is a little gone about the first few minutes which elapsed after

he and William came into the room. He says that Cuthbert was sitting at the table very pale, with his hand clasped on the table before him, looking steadily at him without expression on his face; and that Mackworth leant against the chimney-piece, and looked keenly and curiously at him.

Charles went up silently and kissed his brother on the forehead. Cuthbert neither moved nor spoke. Charles greeted Mackworth civilly, and then leant against the chimney-piece by the side of him, and said what a glorious day it was. William stood at a little distance, looking uneasily from one to another.

Cuthbert broke silence. "I sent for you," he said.

"I am glad to come to you, Cuthbert, though I think you sent for me on business, which I am not very well up to to-day."

"On business," said Cuthbert; "business which must be gone through with to-day, though I expect it will kill me."

Charles, by some instinct (who knows what? it was nothing reasonable, he says) moved rapidly towards William, and laid his hand on his shoulder. I take it, that it arose from that curious gregarious feeling that men have in times of terror. He could not have done better than to move towards his truest friend, whatever it was.

"I should like to prepare you for what is to come," continued Cuthbert, speaking calmly, with the most curious distinctness; "but that would be useless. The blow would be equally severe whether you expect it or not. You two who stand there were nursed at the same breast. That groom, on whose shoulder you have your hand now, is my real brother. You are no relation to me; you are the son of the faithful old servant whom we buried to-day with my father."

Charles said, Ho! like a great sigh. William put his arm round him, and, raising his finger, and looking into his face with his calm honest eyes, said with a smile,—

"This was it, then. We know it all now."

Charles burst out into a wild laugh, and said, "Father Mackworth, ace of trumps! He has inherited a talent for melodrama from his blessed mother. Stop. I beg you pardon, sir, for saying that; I said it in a hurry. It was blackguardly. Let's have the proofs of this, and all that sort of thing, and witnesses too, if you please. Father Mackworth, there have been such things as prosecutions for conspiracy. I have Lord Saltire and Lord Ascot at my back. You have made a desperate cast, sir. My astonishment is that you have allowed your hatred for me to outrun your discretion so far. This matter will cost some money before it is settled."

Father Mackworth smiled, and Charles passed him and rang the bell. Then he went back to William and took his arm.

"Fetch the Fathers Tiernay here immediately," said Charles to the servant who answered the bell.

In a few minutes the worthy priests were in the room. The group was not altered. Father Mackworth still leant against the mantelpiece, Charles and William stood together, and Cuthbert sat pale and calm with his hands clasped together.

Father Tiernay looked at the disturbed group and became uneasy. "Would it not be better to defer the settlement of any family disagreements to another day? On such a solemn occasion—"

"The ice is broken, Father Tiernay," said Charles. "Cuthbert, tell him what you have told me."

Cuthbert, clasping his hands together, did so, in a low, quiet voice.

"There," said Charles, turning to Father Tiernay, "what do you think of that?"

"I am so astounded and shocked that I don't know what to say," said Father Tiernay; "your mind must be abused, my dear sir. The likeness between yourself and Mr. Charles is so great that I cannot believe it. Mackworth, what have you to say to this?"

"Look at William, who is standing beside Charles," said the priest quietly, "and tell me which of those two is most like Cuthbert."

"Charles and William are very much alike, certainly," said Tiernay; "but—"

"Do you remember James Horton, Tiernay?" said Mackworth.

"Surely."

"Did you ever notice the likeness between him and Densil Ravenshoe?"

"I have noticed it, certainly. Especially one night. One night I went to his cottage last autumn. Yes. Well?"

"James Horton was Densil Ravenshoe's half-brother. He was the illegitimate son of Petre."

"Good God!"

"And the man whom you call Charles Ravenshoe, whom I call Charles Horton, is his son."

Charles was looking eagerly from one to the other, bewildered.

"Ask him, Father Tiernay," he said, "what proofs he has. Perhaps he will tell us."

"You hear what Mr. Charles says, Mackworth. I address you because you have spoken last. You must surely have strong proofs for such an astounding statement."

"I have his mother's handwriting," said Father Mackworth.

"My mother's, sir," said Charles, flushing up, and advancing a pace towards him.

"You forget who your mother was," said Mackworth. "Your mother was Norah, James Horton's wife. She confessed the wicked fraud she practised to me, and has committed that confession to paper. I hold it. You have not a point of ground to stand on. Fifty Lord Saltires could not help you one jot. You must submit. You have been living in luxury and receiving an expensive education when you should have been cleaning out the stable. So far from being overwhelmed by this, you should consider how terribly the balance is against you."

He spoke with such terrible convincing calmness that Charles's heart died away within him. He knew the man.

"Cuthbert," he said, "you are a gentleman. Is this true?"

"God knows how terribly true it is," said Cuthbert quietly. Then there was a silence, broken by Charles in a strange thick voice, the like of which none there had heard before.

"I want to sit down somewhere. I want some drink. Will, my own boy, take this d——d thing from round my neck? I can't see; where is there a chair? Oh, God!"

He fell heavily against William, looking deadly white, without sense or power. And Cuthbert looked up at the priest, and said, in a low voice,—

"You have killed him."

Little by little he came round again, and rose on his feet, looking round him as a buck or stag looks when run to soil, and is watching to see which dog will come, with a piteous wild look, despairing and yet defiant. There was a dead silence.

"Are we to be allowed to see this paper?" said Charles at length.

Father Mackworth immediately handed it to him, and he read it. It was completely conclusive. He saw that there was not a loophole to creep out of. The two Tiernays read it and shook their heads. William read it and turned pale. And then they all stood staring blankly at one another.

"You see, sir," said Father Mackworth, "that there are two courses open to you. Either, on the one hand, to acquiesce in the truth of this paper; or, on the other, to accuse me in a court of justice of conspiracy and fraud. If you were to be successful in the latter course, I should be transported out of your way, and the matter would end so. But any practical man would tell you, and you would see in your calmer moments, that no lawyer would undertake your case. What say you, Father Tiernay?"

"I cannot see what case he has, poor dear," said Father Tiernay. "Mackworth," he added, suddenly.

Father Mackworth met his eye with a steady stare, and Tiernay saw there was no hope of explanation there.

"On the other hand," continued

Father Mackworth, "if this new state of things is quietly submitted to (as it must be ultimately, whether quietly or otherwise you yourself will decide), I am authorized to say that the very handsomest provision will be made for you, and that to all intents and purposes your prospects in the world will not suffer in the least degree. I am right in saying so, I believe, Mr. Ravenshoe?"

"You are perfectly right, sir," said Cuthbert, in a quiet, passionless voice. "My intention is to make a provision of three hundred a year for this gentleman, whom, till the last few days, I believed to be my brother. Less than four and twenty hours ago, Charles, I offered Father Mackworth ten thousand pounds for this paper, with a view to destroy it. I would, for your sake, Charles, have committed an act of villainy which would have entailed a life's remorse, and have robbed William, my own brother, of his succession. You see what a poor weak rogue I am, and what a criminal I might become with a little temptation. Father Mackworth did his duty, and refused me. I tell you this to show you that he is, at all events, sincere enough in his conviction of the truth of this."

"You acted like yourself, Cuthbert. Like one who would risk body and soul for one you loved."

He paused; but they waited for him to speak again. And very calmly, in a very low voice, he continued,—

"It is time that this scene should end. No one's interest will be served by continuing it. I want to say a very few words, and I want them to be considered as the words, as it were, of a dying man; for no one here present will see me again till the day when I come back to claim a right to the name I have been bearing so long—and that day will be never."

Another pause. He moistened his lips, which were dry and cracked, and then went on,—

"Here is the paper, Father Mackworth; and may the Lord of Heaven be judge between us if that paper be not true!"

Father Mackworth took it, and, looking him steadily in the face, repeated his words, and Charles's heart sank lower yet as he watched him, and felt that hope was dead.

"May the Lord of Heaven be judge between us two, Charles, if that paper be not true! Amen."

"I utterly refuse," Charles continued, "the assistance which Mr. Ravenshoe has so nobly offered. I go forth alone into the world to make my own way or to be forgotten. Cuthbert and William, you will be sorry for a time, but not for long. You will think of me sometimes of dark winter nights when the wind blows, won't you? I shall never write to you, and shall never return here any more. Worse things than this have happened to men, and they have not died."

All this was said with perfect self-possession, and without a failure in the voice. It was magnificent despair. Father Tiernay, looking at William's face, saw there a sort of sarcastic smile, which puzzled him amazingly.

"I had better," said Charles, "make my will. I should like William to ride my horse Monté. He has thrown a curb, sir, as you know," he said, turning to William; "but he will serve you well, and I know you will be gentle with him."

William gave a short, dry laugh.

"I should have liked to take my terrier away with me, but I think I had better not. I want to have nothing with me to remind me of this place. My greyhound and the pointers I know you will take care of. It would please me to think that William had moved into my room, and had taken possession of all my guns, and fishing rods, and so on. There is a double-barrelled gun left at Venables', in St. Aldate's, at Oxford, for repairs. It ought to be fetched away."

"Now, sir," he said, turning to Cuthbert, "I should like to say a few words about money matters. I owe about 150*l.* at Oxford. It was a great deal more at one time, but I have been more careful lately. I have the bills upstairs. If that could be paid——"

"To the uttermost farthing, my dear Charles," said Cuthbert; "but——"

"Hush!" said Charles, "I have five and twenty pounds by me. May I keep that?"

"I will write you a check for five hundred. I shall move your resolution, Charles," said Cuthbert.

"Never, so help me God!" said Charles; "it only remains to say good-bye. I leave this room without a hard thought towards any one in it. I am at peace with all the world. Father Mackworth, I beg your forgiveness. I have been often rude and brutal to you. I suppose that you always meant kindly to me. Good-bye."

He shook hands with Mackworth, then with the Tiernays; then he offered his hand to William, who took it smiling; and, lastly, he went up to Cuthbert, and kissed him on the cheek, and then walked out of the door into the hall.

William, as he was going, turned as though to speak to Cuthbert, but Cuthbert had risen, and he paused a moment.

Cuthbert had risen, and stood looking wildly about him, then he said, "Oh, my God, he is gone!" And then he broke through them, and ran out into the hall, crying, "Charles, Charles, come back. Only one more word, Charles." And then they saw Charles pause, and Cuthbert kneel down before him, calling him his own dear brother, and saying he would die for him. And then Father Tiernay hastily shut the library door, and left those two wild hearts out in the old hall together alone.

Father Tiernay came back to William, and took both his hands. "What are you going to do?" he said.

"I am going to follow him wherever he goes," said William. "I am never going to leave him again. If he goes to the world's end, I will be with him."

"Brave fellow!" said Tiernay. "If he goes from here, and is lost sight of, we may never see him again. If you go with him, you may change his resolution."

"That I shall never do," said Wil-

liam; "I know him too well. But I'll save him from what I am frightened to think of. I will go to him now. I shall see you again directly; but I must go to him."

He passed out into the hall. Cuthbert was standing alone, and Charles was gone.

CHAPTER XXVII.

THE COUP DE GRACE.

In the long watches of the winter night, when one has awoke from some evil dream, and lies sleepless and terrified with the solemn pall of darkness around one—on one of those deadly, still dark nights, when the window only shows a murky patch of positive gloom in contrast with the nothingness of the walls, when the howling of a tempest round chimney and roof would be welcomed as a boisterous companion—in such still dead times only, lying as in the silence of the tomb, one sees life as it really is, and realizes that one day we shall lie in that bed and not think at all: that the time will come soon when we must die.

Our preachers remind us of this often enough, but we cannot realize it in a pew in broad daylight. You must wake in the middle of the night to do that, and face the thought like a man, that it will come, and come to ninety-nine in a hundred of us, not in a maddening clatter of musquetry as the day is won, or in carrying a line to a stranded ship, or in such like glorious times, when the soul is in mastery over the body, but in bed by slow degrees. It is in darkness and silence only that we realize this; and then let us hope that we humbly remember that death has been conquered for us, and that in spite of our unworthiness we may defy him. And after that sometimes will come the thought, "Are there not evils worse even than death?"

I have made these few remarks (I have made very few in this story, for I want to suggest thought, not to supply it ready-made) because Charles Ravenshoe

has said to me in his wild way that he did not fear death, for that he had died once already.

I did not say anything, but waited for him to go on.

"For what," he continued, "do you make out death even at the worst? A terror, then a pang, more or less severe; then a total severance of all ties on earth, an entire and permanent loss of everything one has loved. After that remorse, and useless regret, and the horrible torture of missed opportunities without number thrust continually before one. The monotonous song of the fiends, "Too late! too late!" I have suffered all these things; I have known what very few men have known and lived—despair; but perhaps the most terrible agony for a time was the feeling of *loss of identity*—that I was not myself; that my whole existence from babyhood had been a lie. This at times, at times only, mind you, washed away from me the only spar to which I could cling—the feeling that I was a gentleman. When the deluge came, that was the only creed I had, and I was left alone as it were on the midnight ocean, out of sight of land, swimming with failing strength."

I have made Charles speak for himself. In this I know that I am right. Now we must go on with him through the gathering darkness without flinching; in terror, perhaps, but not in despair as yet.

It never for one moment entered into his head to doubt the truth of what Father Mackworth had set up. If he had had doubts even to the last, he had none after Mackworth had looked him compassionately in the face, and said, "God judge between us if this paper be not true!" Though he distrusted Mackworth, he felt that no man, be he never so profound an actor, could have looked so and spoken so if he were not telling what he believed to be the truth. And that he and Norah were mistaken he justly felt to be an impossibility. No. He was the child of Petre Ravenshoe's bastard son by an Irish peasant girl. He who but half-an-hour before had

been heir to the proud old name, to the noble old house, the pride of the west country, to hundreds of acres of rolling woodland, to mile beyond mile of sweeping moorland, to twenty thriving farms, deep in happy valleys, or perched high up on the side of lofty downs, was now just this—a peasant, an impostor.

The tenantry, the fishermen, the servants, they would come to know all this. Had he died (ah! how much better than this), they would have mourned for him, but what would they say or think now? That he, the patron, the intercessor, the condescending young prince, should be the child of a waiting woman and a gamekeeper. Ah! mother, mother, God forgive you! I hope you don't know of this.

Adelaide: what would she think of this? He determined that he must go and see her, and tell her the whole miserable story. She was ambitious, but she loved him. Oh yes, she loved him. She could wait. There were lands beyond the sea, where a man could win a fortune in a few years, perhaps in one. There were Canada, and Australia, and India, where a man needed nothing but energy. He never would take one farthing from the Ravenshoes, save the twenty pounds he had. That was a determination nothing could alter. But why need he? There was gold to be won, and forest to be cleared, in happier lands.

Alas, poor Charles! He has never yet set foot out of England, and perhaps never will. He never thought seriously about it but this once. He never had it put before him strongly by any one. Men only emigrate from idleness, restlessness, or necessity; with the two first of these he was not troubled, and the last had not come yet. It would, perhaps, have been better for him to have gone to the backwoods or the diggings; but, as he says, the reason why he didn't was that he didn't. But at this sad crisis of his life it gave him comfort for a little to think about it; only for a little, then thought and terror came sweeping back again.

Lord Saltire? He would be told of this by others. It would be Charles's duty not to see Lord Saltire again. With his present position in society, as a servant's son, there was nothing to prevent his asking Lord Saltire to provide for him, except—what was it? Pride? Well, hardly pride. He was humble enough, God knows; but he felt as if he had gained his goodwill, as it were, by false pretences, and that duty would forbid his presuming on that goodwill any longer. And would Lord Saltire be the same to a lady's-maid's son, as he would to the heir-presumptive of Ravenshoe? No; there must be no humiliation before those stern grey eyes. Now he began to see that he loved the owner of those eyes more deeply than he had thought; and there was a gleam of pleasure in thinking that, when Lord Saltire heard of his fighting bravely unassisted with the world, he would say, "That lad was a brave fellow; a gentleman after all."

Marston? Would this terrible business, which was so new and terrible as to be as yet only half appreciated and nameless—would it make any difference to him? Perhaps it might. But, whether or no, he would humble himself there, and take from him just reproaches for idleness and missed opportunities, however bitter they might be.

And Mary? Poor little Mary! Ah! she would be safe with that good Lady Hainault. That was all. Ah, Charles! what pale little sprite was that outside your door now, listening, dry-eyed, terrified, till you should move? Who saw you come up with your hands clutched in your hair, like a madman, an hour ago, and heard you throw yourself upon the floor, and has waited patiently ever since to see if she could comfort you, were it never so little? Ah, Charles! Foolish fellow!

Thinking, thinking—now with anger, now with tears, and now with terror—till his head was hot and his hands dry, his thoughts began to run into one channel. He saw that action was necessary, and he came to a great and noble resolution, worthy of himself. All the

world was on the one side, and he alone on the other. He would meet the world humbly and bravely, and conquer it. He would begin at the beginning, and find his own value in the world, and then, if he found himself worthy, would claim once more the love and respect of those who had been his friends hitherto.

How he would begin he knew not, nor cared, but it must be from the beginning. And, when he had come to this resolution, he rose up and faced the light of day once more.

There was a still figure sitting in his chair, watching him. It was William.

"William! How long have you been here?"

"Nigh on an hour. I came in just after you, and you have been lying there on the hearth-rug ever since, moaning."

"An hour? Is it only an hour?"

"A short hour."

"It seemed like a year. Why, it is not dark yet. The sun still shines, does it?"

He went to the window and looked out. "Spring," he said, "early spring. Fifty more of them between me and rest most likely. Do I look older, William?"

"You look pale and wild, but not older. I am mazed and stunned. I want you to look like yourself and help me, Charles. We must get away together out of this house."

"You must stay here, William; you are heir to the name and the house. You must stay here and learn your duty; I must go forth and dree my weary weird alone."

"You must go forth, I know; but I must go with you."

"William, that is impossible."

"To the world's end, Charles; I swear it by the holy Mother of God."

"Hush! You don't know what you are saying. Think of your duties."

"I know my duty. My duty is with you."

"William, look at the matter in another point of view. Will Cuthbert let you come with me?"

"I don't care. I am coming."

William was sitting where he had

been in Charles's chair, and Charles was standing beside him. If William had been looking at Charles, he would have seen a troubled thoughtful expression on his face for one moment, followed by a sudden look of determination. He laid his hand on William's shoulder, and said,—

"We must talk this over again. I must go to Ranford and see Adelaide at once, before this news gets there from other mouths. Will you meet me at the old hotel in Covent Garden, four days from this time?"

"Why there?" said William. "Why not at Henley?"

"Why not at London, rather?" replied Charles. "I must go to London. I mean to go to London. I don't want to delay about Ranford. No; say London."

William looked in his face for a moment, and then said,—

"I'd rather travel with you. You can leave me at Wargrave, which is only just over the water from Ranford, or at Twyford, while you go on to Ranford. You must let me do that, Charles."

"We will do that, William, if you like."

"Yes, yes!" said William. "It must be so. Now you must come down-stairs."

"Why?"

"To eat. Dinner is ready. I am going to tea in the servants' hall."

"Will Mary be at dinner, William?"

"Of course she will."

"Will you let me go for the last time? I should like to see the dear little face again. Only this once."

"Charles, you will kill me if you talk like that. All that this house contains is yours, and will be as long as Cuthbert and I are here. Of course you must go. This must not get out for a long while yet—we must keep up appearances."

So Charles went down into the drawing-room. It was nearly dark; and at first he thought that there was no one there, but, as he advanced towards the fireplace, he made out a tall, dark figure, and saw that it was Mackworth.

"I am come, sir," he said "to dinner in the old room for the last time for ever."

"God forbid!" said Mackworth. "Sir, you have behaved like a brave man to-day, and I earnestly hope that, as long as I stay in this house, you will be its honoured guest. It would be simply nonsensical to make any excuses to you for the part I have taken. Even if you had not systematically opposed your interest to mine in this house, I had no other course open. You must see that."

"I believe I owe you my thanks for your forbearance so long," said Charles; "though that was for the sake of my father more than myself. Will you tell me, sir, now we are alone, how long have you known this?"

"Nearly eighteen months," said Father Mackworth promptly.

Mackworth was not an ill-natured man when he was not opposed, and, being a brave man himself, could well appreciate bravery in others. He had knowledge enough of men to know that the revelation of to-day had been as bitter a blow to a passionate, sensitive man like Charles, as he could well endure and live. And he knew that Charles distrusted him, and that all out-of-the-way expressions of condolence would be thrown away; and so, departing from his usual rule of conduct, he spoke for once in a way naturally and sincerely, and said: "I am very, very sorry. I would have done much to avoid this."

Then Mary came in and the Tiernays. Cuthbert did not come down. There was a long, dull dinner, at which Charles forced himself to eat, having a resolution before him. Mary sat scared at the head of the table, and scarcely spoke a word, and, when she rose to go into the drawing-room again, Charles followed her.

She saw that he was coming, and waited for him in the hall. When he shut the dining-room door after him, she ran back, and, putting her two hands on his shoulders, said,—

"Charles! Charles! what is the matter?"

"Nothing, dear; only I have lost my fortune; I am penniless."

"Is it all gone, Charles?"

"All. You will hear how, soon. I just came out to wish my bird good-bye. I am going to London to-morrow."

"Can't you come and talk to me, Charles, a little?"

"No; not to-night. Not to-night."

"You will come and see me at Lady Hainault's in town, Charles?"

"Yes, my love; yes."

"Won't you tell me any more, Charles?"

"No more, my robin. It is good-bye. You will hear all about it soon enough."

"Good-bye."

A kiss, and he was gone up the old staircase towards his own room. When he gained the first landing, he turned and looked at her once more, standing alone in the centre of the old hall in the light of a solitary lamp. A lonely, beautiful little figure, with her arms drooping at her sides, and the quiet, dark eyes turned towards him, so lovingly! And there, in his ruin and desolation, he began to see, for the first time, what others, keener-eyed, had seen long ago. Something that might have been, but could not be now! And so, saying, "I must not see her again," he went up to his own room, and shut the door on his misery.

Once again he was seen that night. William invaded the still room, and got some coffee, which he carried up to him. He found him packing his portmanteau, and he asked William to see to this and to that for him, if he should sleep too long. William made him sit down and take coffee and smoke a cigar, and sat on the footstool at his feet, before the fire, complaining of cold. There they sat an hour or two, smoking, talking of old times, of horses and dogs, and birds and trout, as lads do, till Charles said he would go to bed, and William left him.

He had hardly got to the end of the passage, when Charles called him back, and he came.

"I want to look at you again," said Charles; and he put his two hands on William's shoulders, and looked at him

again. Then he said, "Good night," and went in.

William went slowly away, and, passing to a lower storey, came to the door of a room immediately over the main entrance, above the hall. This room was in the turret above the porch. It was Cuthbert's room.

He knocked softly, and there was no answer; again, and louder. A voice cried querulously, "Come in," and he opened the door.

Cuthbert was sitting before the fire with a lamp beside him and a book on his knee. He looked up and saw a groom before him, and said angrily,—

"I can give no orders to-night. I will not be disturbed to-night."

"It's me, sir," said William.

Cuthbert rose at once. "Come here, brother," he said, "and let me look at you. They told me just now that you were with our brother Charles."

"I stayed with him till he went to bed, and then I came to you."

"How is he?"

"Very quiet—too quiet."

"Is he going away?"

"He is going in the morning."

"You must go with him, William," said Cuthbert, eagerly.

"I came to tell you that I must go with him, and to ask you for some money."

"God bless you. Don't leave him. Write to me every day. Watch and see what he is inclined to settle to, and then let me know. You must get some education too. You will get it with him as well as anywhere. He must be our first care."

William said yes. He must be their first care. He had suffered a terrible wrong.

"We must get to be as brothers to one another, William," said Cuthbert. "That will come in time. We have one great object in common—Charles; and that will bring us together. The time was, when I was a fool, that I thought of being a saint, without human affections. I am wiser now. People near death see many things which are hidden in health and youth."

"Near death, Cuthbert!" said William, calling him so for the first time. "I shall live, please God, to take your children on my knee."

"It is right that you should know, brother, that in a few short years you will be master of Ravenshoe. My heart is gone. I have had an attack to-night."

"But people who are ill don't always die," said William. "Holy Virgin! you must not go and leave me all abroad in the world like a lost sheep."

"I like to hear you speak like that, William. Two days ago, I was moving heaven and earth to rob you of your just inheritance."

"I like you the better for that. Never think of that again. Does Mackworth know of your illness?"

"He knows everything."

"If Charles had been a Catholic, would he have concealed this?"

"No; I think not. I offered him ten thousand pounds to hush it up."

"I wish he had taken it. I don't want to be a great man. I should have been far happier as it was. I was half a gentleman, and had everything I wanted. Shall you oppose my marrying when Charles is settled?"

"You must marry, brother. I can never marry, and would not if I could. You must marry, certainly. The estate is a little involved; but we can soon bring it right. Till you marry, you must be contented with four hundred a year."

William laughed. "I will be content and obedient enough, I warrant you. But, when I speak of marrying, I mean marrying my present sweetheart."

Cuthbert looked up suddenly. "I did not think of that. Who is she?"

"Master Evans's daughter, Jane."

"A fisherman's daughter," said Cuthbert. "William, the mistress of Ravenshoe ought to be a lady."

"The master of Ravenshoe ought to be a gentleman," was William's reply. "And, after your death (which I don't believe in, mind you), he won't be. The master of Ravenshoe then will be only a groom; and what sort of a fine lady would he buy with his money, think you? A woman who would de-

spise him and be ashamed of him. No, by St. George and the dragon, I will marry my old sweetheart or be single!"

"Perhaps you are right, William," said Cuthbert; "and, if you are not, I am not one who has a right to speak about it. Let us in future be honest and straightforward, and have no more miserable *esclandres*, in God's name. What sort of girl is she?"

"She is handsome enough for a duchess, and she is very quiet and shy."

"All the better. I shall offer not the slightest opposition. She had better know soon what is in store for her."

"She shall; and the blessing of all the holy saints be on you! I must go now. I must be up at dawn."

"Don't go yet, William. Think of the long night that is before me. Sit with me, and let me get used to your voice. Tell me about the horses, or anything—only don't leave me alone yet."

William sat down with him. They sat long and late. When at last William rose to go, Cuthbert said,—

"You will make a good landlord, William. You have been always a patient, faithful servant, and you will make a good master. Our people will get to love you better than ever they would have loved me. Cling to the old faith. It has served us well so many hundred years. It seems as if God willed that Ravenshoe should not pass from the hands of the faithful. And now, one thing more; I must see Charles before he goes. When you go to wake him in the morning, call me, and I will go with you. Good night!"

In the morning they went up together to wake him. His window was open, and the fresh spring air was blowing in. His books, his clothes, his guns, and rods, were piled about in their usual confusion. His dog was lying on the hearth-rug, and stretched himself as he came to greet them. The dog had a glove at his feet, and they wondered at it. The curtains of his bed were drawn close. Cuthbert went softly to them and drew them aside. He was not there. The bed was smooth.

"Gone! gone!" cried Cuthbert. "I half feared it. Fly, William, for God's sake, to Lord Ascot's, to Ranford; catch him there, and never leave him again. Come and get some money and begone. You may be in time. If we should lose him after all—after all!"

William needed no second bidding. In an hour he was at Stonington. Mr. Charles Ravenshoe had arrived there at daybreak, and had gone on in the coach which started at eight. William posted to Exeter, and at eight o'clock in the evening saw Lady Ascot at Ranford. Charles Ravenshoe had been there that afternoon, but was gone. And then Lady Ascot, weeping wildly, told him such news as made him break from the room with an oath, and dash through the scared servants in the hall out into the darkness, to try to overtake the carriage he had discharged, and reach London.

The morning before, Adelaide had eloped with Lord Welter.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

FLIGHT.

WHEN William left Charles in his room at Ravenshoe, the latter sat down in his chair and began thinking.

The smart of the blow, which had fallen so heavily at first, had become less painful. He knew by intuition that it would be worse on the morrow, and on many morrows; but at present it was alleviated. He began to dread sleeping, for fear of the waking.

He dreaded the night and dreams; and, more than all, the morrow and the departure. He felt that he ought to see Cuthbert again, and he dreaded that. He dreaded the servants seeing him go. He had a horror of parting from all he had known so long, formally. It was natural. It would be so much pain to all concerned; were it not better avoided? He thought of all these things, and tried to persuade himself that these were the reasons which made him do what he had as good as determined to do an hour or two before, what he had in his

mind when he called William back in the corridor—to go away alone, and hide and mope like a wounded stag for a little time.

It was his instinct to do so. Perhaps it would have been the best thing for him. At all events he determined on it, and packed up a portmanteau and carpet-bag, and then sat down again, waiting.

"Yes," he said to himself, "it will be better to do this. I must get away from William, poor lad. He must not follow my fortunes, for many reasons."

His dog had been watching him, looking, with his bright loving eyes, first at him and then at his baggage, wondering what journey they were going on now. When Charles had done packing, and had sat down again in his chair before the fire, the dog leapt up in his lap unbidden, and laid his head upon his breast.

"Grip, Grip!" said Charles, "I am going away to leave you for ever, Grip. Dogs don't live so long as men, my boy; you will be quietly under the turf and at rest, when I shall have forty long years more to go through with."

The dog wagged his tail, and pawed his waistcoat. He wanted some biscuit. Charles got him some, and then went on talking.

"I am going to London, old dog. I am going to see what the world is like. I shan't come back before you are dead, Grip, I expect. I have got to win money and a name for the sake of one who is worth winning it for. Very likely I shall go abroad, to the land where the stuff comes from they make sovereigns of, and try my luck at getting some of the yellow rubbish. And she will wait in the old house at Ranford."

He paused here. The thought came upon him, "Would it not be more honourable to absolve Adelaide from her engagement? Was he acting generously in demanding of her to waste the best part of her life in waiting till a ruined man had won fortune and means?"

The answer came. "She loves me. If I can wait, why not she?"

"I have wronged her by such a thought, Grip. Haven't I, my boy?"—and so on. I needn't continue telling you

the nonsense Charles talked to his dog. Men will talk nonsense to their dogs and friends when they are in love; and such nonsense is but poor reading at any time. To us who know what had happened, and how worthless and false Adelaide was, it would be merely painful and humiliating to hear any more of it. I only gave you so much to show you how completely Charles was in the dark, poor fool, with regard to Adelaide's character, and to render less surprising the folly of his behaviour after he heard the news at Ranford.

Charles judged every one by his own standard. She had told him that she loved him; and perhaps she did, for a time. He believed her. As for vanity, selfishness, fickleness, calculation, coming in and conquering love, he knew it was impossible in his own case, and so he conceived it impossible in hers. I think I have been very careful to impress on you that Charles was not wise. At all events, if I have softened matters so far hitherto as to leave you in doubt, his actions, which we shall have to chronicle immediately, will leave not the slightest doubt of it. I love the man. I love his very faults in a way. He is a reality to me, though I may not have the art to make him so to you. His mad, impulsive way of forming a resolution, and his honourable obstinacy in sticking to that resolution afterwards, even to the death, are very great faults. But they are, more or less, the faults of many men who have made a very great figure in the world, or I have read history wrong. Men with Charles Ravenshoe's character, and power of patience and application superadded, turn out very brilliant characters for the most part. Charles had not been drilled into habits of application early enough. Densil's unthinking indulgence had done him more harm than enough, and he was just the sort of boy to be spoilt at school—a favourite among the masters and the boys; always just up to his work, and no more. It is possible that Eton in one way, or Rugby in another, might have done for him what Shrewsbury certainly did not. At Eton, thrown

at once into a great, free republic, he might have been forced to fight his way up to his proper place, which, I believe, would not have been a low one. At Rugby he would have had his place to win all the same; but to help him he would have had all the traditionary school policy which a great man has left behind him as an immortal legacy. It was not to be. He was sent to a good and manly school enough, but one where there was for him too little of competition. Shrewsbury is, in most respects, the third school in England; but it was, unluckily, not the school for him. He was too great a man there.

At Oxford, too, he hardly had a fair chance. Lord Welter was there before him, and had got just such a set about him as one would expect from that young gentleman's character and bringing up. These men were Charles's first and only acquaintances at the University. What chance was there among them for correcting and disciplining himself? None. The wonder was that he came out from among them without being greatly deteriorated. The only friend Charles ever had who could guide him on the way to being a man was John Marston. But John Marston, to say the truth, was sometimes too hard and didactic, and very often roused Charles's obstinacy through want of tact. Marston loved Charles, and thought him better than the ninety and nine who need no repentance; but it did not fall to Marston's lot to make a man of Charles. Some one took that in hand who never fails.

This is the place for my poor apology for Charles's folly. If I had inserted it before, you would not have attended to it, or would have forgotten it. If I have done my work right, it is merely a statement of the very conclusion you must have come to. In the humiliating scenes which are to follow, I only beg you to remember that Charles Horton was Charles Ravenshoe once; and that, while he was a gentleman, the people loved him well.

Once, about twelve o'clock, he left his room and passed through the house

to see if all was quiet. He heard the grooms and footmen talking in the servants' hall. He stole back again to his room and sat before the fire.

In half an hour he rose again, and put his portmanteau and carpet-bag outside his room door. Then he took his hat, and rose to go.

One more look round the old room! The last for ever! The present overmastered the past, and he looked round almost without recognition. I doubt whether at great crises men have much time for recollecting old associations. I looked once into a room, which had been my home, ever since I was six years old, for five-and-twenty years, knowing I should never see it again. But it was to see that I had left nothing behind me. The coach was at the door, and they were calling for me. Now I could draw you a correct map of all the blotches and cracks in the ceiling, as I used to see them when I lay in bed of a morning. But, then, I only shut the door and ran down the passage, without even saying "good-bye, old bedroom." Charles Ravenshoe looked round the room thoughtlessly, and then blew out the candle, went out, and shut the door.

The dog whined and scratched to come after him; so he went back again. The old room bathed in a flood of moonlight, and, seen through the open window, the busy chafing sea, calling to him to hasten!

He took a glove from the table, and, laying it on the hearth-rug, told the dog to mind it. The dog looked wistfully at him and lay down. The next moment he was outside the door again.

Through long moonlit corridors, down the moonlit hall, through dark passages, which led among the sleeping household, to the door in the priest's tower. The household slept, old men and young men, maids and matrons, quietly, and dreamt of this and of that. And he, who yesterday was nigh master of all, passed out from among them, and stood alone in the world, outside the dark old house, which he had called his home.

Then he felt that the deed was done. Was it only the night-wind from the north that laid such a chill hand on his heart? Busy waves upon the shore talking eternally,—“We have come in from the Atlantic, bearing messages; we have come over foundered ships and the bones of drowned sailors, and we tell our messages and die upon the shore!”

Shadows that came sweeping from the sea, over lawn and flower-bed, and wrapped the old mansion like a pall for one moment, and then left it shining again in the moonlight, clear, pitiless! Within, warm rooms, warm beds, and the bated breath of sleepers, lying secure in the lap of wealth and order. Without, hard, cold stone! The great world around waiting to devour one more atom! The bright unsympathizing stars, and the sea, babbling of the men it had rolled over, whose names should never be known!

Now the park, with heads of ghostly startled deer, and the sweet scent of growing fern; then the rush of the brook, the bridge, and the vista of woodland above; and then the sleeping village!

To be continued.

A TRUE HERO.

JAMES BRAIDWOOD:

DIED JUNE 22ND, 1861.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "JOHN HALIFAX, GENTLEMAN."

Not at the battle front,—

Writ of in story ;

Not on the blazing wreck

Steering to glory ;

Not while in martyr-pangs

Soul and flesh sever,

Died he—this Hero new ;

Hero for ever.

No pomp poetic crown'd,

No forms enchained him,

No friends applauding watched,

No foes arraigned him :

Death found him there, without

Grandeur or beauty,

Only an honest man

Doing his duty :

Just a God-fearing man,

Simple and lowly,

Constant at kirk and hearth,

Kindly as holy :

Death found—and touched him with

Finger in flying :—

Lo ! he rose up complete—

Hero undying.

Now, all men mourn for him,

Lovingly raise him

Up from his life obscure,

Chronicle, praise him ;

Tell his last act, done midst

Peril appalling,

And the last word of cheer

From his lips falling ;

Follow in multitudes

To his grave's portal ;

Leave him there, buried

In honour immortal.

So many a Hero walks

Daily beside us,

Till comes the supreme stroke

Sent to divide us.

Then the LORD calls His own,—

Like this man, even,

Carried, Elijah-like,

Fire-winged, to heaven.

THE STORY OF BURNT NJAL.¹

I WENT the other day to see Mr. Barker's "great picture" of the "Relief of Lucknow." My friend Vibgyor says "large." Whether it be "great" or "large" I really won't dispute. I only know that it pleased me, and something more ; and that I would rather have it in a National Gallery for myself and others to look at, than any quantity you can show me of

¹ The Story of Burnt Njal ; or Life in Iceland at the end of the Tenth Century. From the Icelandic of the Njal's Saga. By George Webbe Dasent, D.C.L. With an Introduction, Maps, and Plans. 2 Vols. Edinburgh : Edmonston and Douglas, 1861.

Rapes of the Sabines and Martyrdoms of St. Sebastian. For it presented to me vividly enough one memorable scene of our wondrous Eastern drama, one consecrated field of our dear-bought glory, a vision, good to look at, of Britain's greatness, embodied there visibly in that choice gathering of her heroes. And as I looked at these doughty men, their high calm looks, their stalwart forms, their dusty garments, their blood-spattered trappings, I felt proud and thankful that we have still such men. Men whose very aspect, had they

done nothing for us,—had they never given their life-blood to preserve our name and fame,—is suggestive of great deeds, of fearlessness against odds, of trustiness in need, of invincible endurance, of standing by each other like brothers to the last. Blessings be with them, and immortal praise!

I had just been reading the *Njala*, and my fancy found family resemblances in these modern worthies to the old heroes of the North. It was no fancy, however, to trace in the character and deeds of Britain's worthies the same stuff of manhood, the same features of a race born to rule land and sea by force of valour joined to wisdom, as were found nine centuries ago in the vales of Rangriver, and on the banks of the Markflect. We generally speak of the British family in the old or new world as the Anglo-Saxon race, and the term may do as well as any other. But there is such a mixture of qualities and of races, and these very various, in the constitution of the British family, taken as a whole, that it is hardly more correct to call it Anglo-Saxon than Danish, Norman, or Celtic. Roughly speaking, however, I suppose it is agreed that there are three chief streams in the current of our blood; that the Saxon element gave us that substratum of working industry, and practical patience, which distinguishes the mass of our population, especially the English; that to the Celtic blood is due much of the rarer element of speculative subtlety, and the poetico-sentimental vein, whence flow traditional pride and veneration; while the Norse element, call it Danish, Norwegian, or Norman, is the seed of our highest intelligence and power. The first has ploughed our fields and woven our garments, constructed our machinery, conducts our business and our committees. It makes us what we are in times of peace, subduing the earth, and cheerfully possessing it. The second has helped at once to soften and to inspire us, making the present more beautiful, and the past more glorious. The third gives the regal force that guides great affairs, that sways a nation's destinies,

and leads through all perils when any high thing is to be done. It has sent our explorers to cut their way to new worlds, or die; our bold adventurers to build up states and civil order in the primeval wilds; our great captains to carry the old "meteor-flag" triumphant through the smoke of a thousand battles.

I know that this kind of analysis is apt to run into nonsense, and it doesn't do to press distinctions of races too strongly; otherwise we get into that caricature of ethnology which makes all Frenchmen lean and vain, all Englishmen solid and good-natured, all Scotchmen raw-boned and canny. Yet I still think, in the main, that so far as the Norse qualities appear in our British history, it is as I have said; and therefore I greatly respect those Sea-king ancestors of ours, in spite of all their fierceness; and I love and prize the Sagas that tell of their deeds, dark as are the pages with the traces of blood. For under that fierceness and, bloodshed I still find all on which man or woman rest their faith and love: and, shudder as we may at their savage revenges, that pursued whole families to death, what man among us does not feel that, had he been one of them, he should have done the very same? Let us not imagine that they, too, did not shudder now and then at these things which wild nature taught them to consider just and manly. The most good-natured of us has, perhaps, a spice of cruelty in him that he doesn't know; only when our friends get massacred, and our blood and pride are up, do we somewhat realize it. There are few of us, I believe, indeed, who would not whet their swords as fiercely in foemen's blood as ever Viking did, if we had not heard of an All-Father more gracious than Odin, a love more mighty than that which followed Balder in vain to Hela's inexorable realm. I have, I confess, very little sympathy with that view of things to which the rapine and barbarity of those early Titans is simply hideous. I would even ask, what great people has ever been whose early footprints are not marked with blood? Egyptians,

Hebrews, Assyrians, Greeks, Romans, Saracens, Franks, Normans, they are all alike; every one of them planted their empire among graves; their crest is ever the same, a Bloody Hand. But it would be a mistake to imagine that there was among these fierce men no such thing as forgiveness, remorse, tenderness, self-sacrifice. The back-ground of the picture is dark, but it is full of touches of light and beauty. This "Saga of Burnt Njal" is mainly a chronicle of manslaughter, and the climax of the story is a deed of horrible revenge. But the sunshine of humanity and friendship illumines the stern procession of figures from beginning to end, and the last page of the story shows us the beautiful picture of the great Burner Flosi springing up and kissing the last and deadliest of the Avengers; "and they two were atoned with a full atonement."

The story of Burnt Njal, though, of course, to some extent indebted to the invention of the narrator, is substantially an authentic piece of biographical history. It is expressly presented to our attention, not merely as a story of thrilling interest, but as a picture, unique in its vividness and completeness, of the life that was led in the tenth century by one of the most remarkable, and to us most interesting, communities in Europe. At the very opening of the book we are introduced to the family hearth, and are carried on through a series of family transactions, where we meet all the members of the household, hear their private conversations, and see the lineaments of their bold faces, whether flushed with deadly passion or in the calm repose of domestic life. It is, indeed, a glorious book, full of reality and of fiery human nature; combining, as none but the greatest works do, the most straightforward simplicity and accuracy of detail, with true epic breath and movement towards a grand catastrophe. It has the greatest variety of characters, men of the highest nobility and wisdom, as well as some abominable villains. Most of the men are eminently warlike; but the chief hero of the tale, and some of the best characters in it, are men of peace,

averse to strife, and ready to forgive. There are deeds of treachery and unmanly surprises, but fair-play is the recognised order of the day, as we might expect in the ancestors of Englishmen; two solitary men will not fall on a company of fifteen till they are wide awake and armed. Coolness in danger is joined to an inner warmth of passion and emotion that sometimes bursts out irrepressibly; the brave and wise Thorhall is so moved when he hears of the burning of his father-in-law Njal, that the blood gushes out at his ears, and he goes off in a swoon: like a true Northerner, he feels ashamed of his emotion when it is over. The women play an important part, and not an amiable one—they are the firebrands of the story; ladies of strong temper, that set on their husbands and brothers to shed blood when they would rather be at peace. But there is something queenly about them too; and all the characters have the charm of perfect naturalness, standing out, sometimes by the briefest notice, bold and individual. As we read we live again in that stern old time, in its strange dark deeds we find the kernel of greater histories, and amid its wild scenery we still feel that we are not far from home.

Our story begins about the year 960, and occupies about sixty years. The scene of action is chiefly on the southern coast of Iceland, and in the vales that lie between the south-western slopes of the Vatna Jökull and the waters of the Broadfirth on the west. We are introduced at once to two brothers, who live in the Broadfirth dales. Hauskuld, the elder, has a daughter named Hallgerda, fair and tall, with hair that flowed to her waist as soft as silk; she is playing on the floor with other girls, in the middle of the hall, where a feast is being held. Her father calls her, takes her by the chin, and kisses her. "Is she not fair?" he says, turning to his brother Hrut. Hrut held his peace. Hauskuld asked again what he thought of her. "Fair enough is the maid," said Hrut, "and many will smart for it; but this I know not, whence thief's eyes have come into

our race." Then Hauskuld was wroth, and no wonder. Thus we are introduced to the Helen of this Northern prose epic, whose fair face and hard heart cause woe to many brave men.

Hrut's brother advises him to marry, and directs his choice to the fair Unna, only daughter of the great lawyer Mord, surnamed "Fiddle," because of his sweet eloquence. So, at the meeting of the Althing, they go to Mord's booth, and, after general conversation, Hauskuld breaks the matter in this plain style:—"I have a bargain to speak to thee about; Hrut wishes to become thy son-in-law, and buy thy daughter; and I, for my part, will not be sparing in the matter." The learned papa is agreeable, and the matter is settled on the spot before witnesses, the fair Unna never being once consulted. It is interesting to find that the practice of buying brides, not yet obsolete, is sanctioned by such ancient precedents in the custom of our forefathers. Hrut and his wife don't get on well together unfortunately, and, after three years of wedded life, Unna, by advice of her sage father, takes witness before her husband's bed, and at his main door, that she separates herself from him by a lawful separation. She then rides away home to her father, makes similar proclamation at the Hill of Laws, and the matter is settled as well as if Sir Cresswell Cresswell had done it. Hrut knits his brows when he comes home and hears what has happened, but he keeps his feelings well in hand (a great faculty among these men, and by no means wanting in their descendants), and says nothing about it for half a year to any one. At the next summer's Thing, Mord brings an action against him for his daughter's dower; to which Hrut replies by an offer of wager of battle. Mord, by advice of his friends, declines, amid great hooting on the Hill of Laws, and Hrut gets much honour.

We are now told how Hallgerda has grown up to be the fairest of women to look at; tall of stature, so that she was called "Long Coat:" so rich in her golden hair that she could hide herself in it; but lavish and hard-hearted. She

had been ill brought-up, it seems, not in her father's house, but by her foster-father, Thioستolf, a Hebridean by stock—a fierce, strong man, "who had slain many men, and made no atonement in money for one of them;" rather an ugly customer, as we soon find. A suitor comes to Hallgerda from the Middlefell's strand, on the other side of the bay—Thorwald, a brave and courteous, but somewhat hot-tempered man. The proud Hallgerda is much displeased with the match; but her foster-father grimly consoles her with the assurance that she will be married a *second time*. Hallgerda shows herself a bad housewife, at once wasteful and grudging; and, when spring came, the house was bare of meal and stock-fish. She tells her husband that he must bestir himself; he says the same stock used to last till summer. "What care I," says Hallgerda, "if you and your father have made your money by starving yourselves?" The hasty Thorwald slaps her in the face, and draws blood, but goes off at once, like a good man, with a boat's crew to the Bear-Isles for meal and fish. Thioستolf comes up and finds Hallgerda sitting gloomily, with a mark on her cheek. She tells him who has done it; he goes straight to the shore, runs out a six-oared boat, and rows off to the Bear-Isles. He finds Thorwald at work, and begins to help him; picks a quarrel, and with his great axe, that had a haft overlaid with iron, fells him on the spot. He then hews at the gunwale of the skiff, till "the dark blue sea poured in, and down she went with all her freight," while he leaps into his own boat, and rows away to inform Hallgerda that she is now a widow, a piece of news which she receives with the most high-bred equanimity. Her good father, too, on hearing of this miserable business, serenely remarks: "Ah! Hrut was not far wrong when he told me that this bargain would draw mickle misfortune after it. But there's no good in troubling oneself about a thing that's done and gone." And presently the matter is agreeably settled by an atonement of "200 in silver"

(equal to 9*l.* sterling, as we learn from the editor's chapter on Icelandic money) which was then "thought a good price for a man."

And now for the description of the peerless Gunnar of Lithend, the flower of Icelandic chivalry:—

Gunnar Hamond's son dwelt at Lithend, in the Fleetlithe. He was a tall man in growth, and a strong man—best skilled in arms of all men. He could cut or thrust or shoot if he chose as well with his left as with his right hand, and he smote so swiftly with his sword, that three seemed to flash through the air at once. He was the best shot with the bow of all men, and never missed his mark. He could leap more than his own height, with all his war-gear, and as far backwards as forwards. He could swim like a seal, and there was no game in which it was any good for any one to strive with him; and so it has been said that no man was his match. He was handsome of feature, and fair skinned. His nose was straight, and a little turned up at the end. He was blue-eyed and bright-eyed, and ruddy-cheeked. His hair thick, and of good hue, and hanging down in comely curls. The most courteous of men was he, of sturdy frame and strong will, bountiful and gentle, a fast friend, but hard to please when making them. He was wealthy in goods. His brother's name was Kolskegg; he was a tall strong man, a noble fellow, and undaunted in everything."

Immediately after we are introduced to Njal and his brave wife, Bergthora:—

"Njal was wealthy in goods, and handsome of face; no beard grew on his chin. He was so great a lawyer, that his match was not to be found. Wise too he was, and foreknowing and foresighted. Of good counsel, and ready to give it, and all that he advised men was sure to be the best for them to do. Gentle and generous, he unravelled every man's knotty points who came to see him about them. Bergthora was his wife's name; she was Skarphedinn's daughter, a very high-spirited, brave-hearted woman, but somewhat hard-tempered.

Here is the daguerreotype portrait of their eldest son. Let it be observed how swiftness of foot and a good head of hair were among the notable attributes of a Norseman as much as they were of the Homeric Achæan:—

"Skarphedinn was the eldest. He was a tall man in growth, and strong withal; a good swordsman; he could swim like a seal, the swiftest-footed of men, and bold and dauntless; he had a great flow of words and quick utterance; a good skald too; but still for the

most part he kept himself well in hand; his hair was dark brown, with crisp curly locks; he had good eyes; his features were sharp, and his face ashen pale, his nose turned up and his front teeth stuck out, and his mouth was very ugly. Still he was the most soldier-like of men."

We pass over the clever trick by which Gunnar succeeds in recovering Unna's dower; and that great Viking cruise in which he gets possession of the wondrous bill, which its owner Hallgrim had made "by seething spells," and which sung aloud when a man was to be slain by it, "such a strong nature had that bill in it." This is the weapon that figures in the centre of the admirable design on the back of Dr. Dasent's book, from the pencil of Mr. Drummond. On their return home the brothers rode to the Thing, most bravely arrayed, and men came out of every booth to wonder at them. So did the women, as may well be supposed; and Gunnar was easy and merry with them all. And now it fell on a day that he passed by the Mossfell booths, and met there a woman in goodly attire, who addressed him boldly, and tells him that her name is Hallgerda. They sit down and talk together "long and loud," she in her red kirtle and scarlet cloak trimmed with needlework, he in the scarlet clothes given him by King Harold Gorm's son, and the gold ring on his arm which Earl Hacon had given him. The end of their talk is that he pops the question on the spot, and she, as is proper, refers him to her father. He goes straightway to Hauskuld's booth, and makes his offer. They frankly tell him of her bad fame, but he is not to be frightened: that bold fair front and the golden tresses falling over the scarlet kirtle had done for him, as has been the fate of so many a Samson before and after him. Her dangerousness apparently makes her the more attractive. The match is struck, and Gunnar rides home. He goes and tells Njal what he has done. Njal "took it heavily;" and his forebodings are soon realized. The two ladies, Hallgerda and Bergthora, fall out on a little question of precedence—that old *origo mali* which, as Mr. Carlyle says,

speaking of a similar scene in the Nibelungen Lied, has been at the bottom of all the rows, great or small, that have ever been since the time of Cain and Abel. They separate, vowing mutual mischief, and presently it begins to work. Hallgerda takes the initiative, and sets on her "grieve," or foreman Kol, to murder Swart, one of Njal's house-carles. When the atonement-money is being paid over to Njal, Bergthora remarks quietly, "As much shall be paid for Kol." In due time Kol gets a spear through his middle, and Njal hands over the same purse to Gunnar that had been paid for Swart. So the plot goes thickening, one murder following another with awful regularity, and both dames declaring that they never will give in. The men make peace gladly every time, but seem powerless to stay the current of feminine revenge. At last Hallgerda gets Thord Freedmanson slain, who had fostered all Njal's sons, and the feud begins to assume a more important aspect.

The chief hand in Thord's slaying was Sigmund, Gunnar's first cousin, a strong and comely man, a great voyager, proud and noisy, a good skald, and much given to jibes and mocking. To please Hallgerda, he composes some satiric doggerel upon Njal and his sons, containing some very insulting allusions to their beardlessness. This he recites in presence of some "gangrel women," who, of course, go off straight to Bergthora and tell the whole story. The effect is like oil on fire, and the spirited old lady bursts out with the news as soon as the men sit down to table. "We are no women," says Skarphedinn, "that we should fly into a rage at every 'little thing.'" "And yet the good-natured Gunnar was wroth for your 'sakes,'" responds the mother. "If such insults don't move you, nothing will." "The carline, our mother, 'thinks this fine sport,'" said Skarphedinn, affecting a scornful smile. But all the while "the sweat burst out on his brow, and red flecks came over his cheeks, and that was not his wont." Grim bit his lips in silence, and Helgi said never a word. And at even, when

Njal is going into his box-bed, he hears an axe ringing on the panel behind, and he finds that the shields hung up in another of the beds are away. He pulls on his shoes and runs out in time to see the lads hastening up the slope. "Whither away, Skarphedinn?" he cries. "To look after the sheep," says Skarphedinn, and sings a verse, being a skald. "Twould be well then," says the old man, "if it turned out so that the prey does not get away from you;" and, with this oracular hint, he turns into bed again. At daybreak, the youths come up with Sigmund and Skiolld, the two slayers of Thord, close to Lithend. Then follows a most Homeric scene of cutting and thrusting. Skarphedinn engages Sigmund, and with his redoubtable axe, the "Ogress of War," cleaves him first through the corslet and then through the helm. Just as he has hewn off his head, Hallgerda's shepherd goes by; he hands it to him, and bids him bear it to his mistress with his compliments: she would know if that head had made jeering songs about the family of Njal. Then the young homicides fare home to tell of their morning's work. "Good luck to your hands!" says old Njal, who, with all his mildness and wisdom, had no objection to a well-executed manslaughter, if only done in a fair and gentlemanly way.

A few years pass, and there is great dearth in Iceland. Now, the "thief's eyes," of which Hrut took such early note, became manifest. Hallgerda makes an Irish thrall, Malcolm, steal two horse-loads of food from a neighbour, Otkell, who had churlishly refused to sell any. When Gunnar comes home from the Thing with a company, and cheese and butter are set on the table, he asks "whence the food came?" Hallgerda answers tartly that housekeeping is no man's business. Gunnar's temper is roused, and he slaps her on the cheek, saying, "Ill indeed is it if I am a partaker with thieves!" She said, "*She would bear that slap in mind, and repay it if she could.*" After the theft is traced, through the crafty counsel of Mord Valgard's son, Gunnar's first

cousin, Gunnar offers double the value of the stolen food, but his spiteful neighbour, Skamkell, persuades Otkell to reject the offer and prosecute his claim at law. This leads to a new feud, fomented by the malice of Skamkell. One day Gunnar goes down to sow corn (we have evidences all through the story of the industrious character of these people; the greatest men among them worked honestly with their hands), his corn-sieve in one hand, an axe in the other; he lays down his cloak of fine stuff and his axe, and goes sowing over the field; when down comes Otkell, galloping over the ground, rides right over him, and, as he passes, drives one of his spurs into Gunnar's ear, making a great gash. Before many days, Otkell and seven companions are seen riding along Markfleet. Gunnar saddles his horse, girds on sword and shield, sets helm on head, and grasps his bill. Something "sung loud in it," and his mother Rannveig heard it. She goes up to him, and says, "Wrath-fulart thou now, my son, and neversaw 'I thee thus before." Gunnar says nothing, but throws himself on horseback and rides away. He is soon joined by his brother, Kolskegg, and they presently come up with Otkell and his party. "There and then they slay eight men:" and, as they ride home, Gunnar says, "I would like to know whether I am 'by so much the less brisk and bold 'than other men because I think more 'of killing men than they?"

In due time these slaughters are atoned for; but the feud waxed deadlier, and there is more and more bloodshed, till at length Gunnar and Kolskegg are sentenced to banishment for three years. So all is settled for their departure, and the ship is "boun," and their baggage is on board. Gunnar rides to Bergthorsknoll, and to other homesteads, to take leave of all friends; and all are sorry, but hope to see him return. Then comes this sad but pretty picture, a trait of the Northern character that still exhibits itself strongly, when the emigrant ship is in the offing, and the sorrowful voyager has his last look to

take of the bonnie glen where he was born:—

"Gunnar threw his arms round each of the household when he was 'boun,' and every one of them went out of doors with him; he leans on the butt of his spear and leaps into the saddle, and he and Kolskegg ride away.

"They ride down along Markfleet, and just then Gunnar's horse tripped and threw him off. He turned with his face up towards the Lithe and the homestead at Lithend, and said—

"Fair is the Lithe—so fair, that it has never seemed to me so fair; the corn-fields are white to harvest, and the home mead is mown; and now I will ride back home, and not fare abroad at all."

And so back Gunnar rides, a doomed man; while Kolskegg fares abroad, and in Denmark is baptized, and becomes "God's knight," goes on to Russia, thence to Micklegarth (Constantinople), and the last heard of him was, that he married a wife, became captain of the Varangians, and stayed there till his death-day.

The plot against Gunnar is now made strong by the craft of his cousin Mord, and forty men are joined in the league. Njal offers to send his sons to live with him, but the magnanimous man will stand or fall alone. One morning, in the autumn (A.D. 990), when all his people are down in the isles at the hay-making, Gunnar is awakened in his hall by the death-howl of his faithful hound. The axe of Aunund of Witchwood had pierced his brain; the enemy are at hand. A man is sent to climb up and see through the window-slits if Gunnar is at home. Gunnar is awake, and sees a red kirtle passing. He thrusts out his bill, and Thorgrim the Easterling topples to the ground, with the information for his companions that Gunnar's bill is certainly at home; having delivered which, he straightway gives up the ghost. Then commences the attack, while Gunnar shoots out his arrows and picks off his enemies one by one. Mord the Guileful proposes to burn him, house and all, but the magnanimous Gizur says that shall never be. Then Mord advises to cast ropes over the projecting ends of the roof-beams, and so heave the roof off bodily; and this is soon done. Gunnar still shoots away,

till up springs Thorbrand on the wall and cuts his bow-string, getting a speedy thrust from Gunnar's bill before he has time to return. Gunnar has slain two men, and wounded eight; he has himself got two wounds, but all men said, "He never once winced at wounds or death." Then, turning to Hallgerda, he says, "Give me two locks of thy hair, and ye two, my mother and thou, twist them together into a bowstring for me." "Does aught lie on it?" she says. "My life lies on it," says her husband. "Well," responds the stony-hearted one, "now I will call to thy mind that slap thou gavest me; and 'I care never a whit whether thou hold out a long while or a short.'" Then Gunnar sang a stave, and added, "Every one has something to boast of, and I will ask thee no more for this." And still he made a stout defence, and wounded other eight men very sorely, till at length he falls, worn out with toil. Then they wounded him with many and great wounds, and still he held out against them as he lay. "But at last it came about that they slew him." So fell the peerless Gunnar, and many a skald sang of his famous life and death.

We next hear of the adventures and prowess of Njal's sons, Helgi and Grim; how they cruise to the Scottish and English isles, and do great deeds against Vikings and Earls, and acquire the friendship of Kari, Solmund's son, one of Earl Sigurd's body-guard, a native of the Hebrides, who afterwards marries their sister Helga, and proves himself a man of the highest mark in the story. On their return home, after five years, a feud arises between them and Thrain Sigfus' son, a man for whom they had done and suffered much in their southern cruise. On a bright morning the foes meet on the icy banks of Markfleet, and Skarphedinn, clearing the deep stream with a bound, skims along the ice "like a bird," and, before Thrain can look about him, comes crashing through his head with the "Ogress of War," so that his teeth fall out on the ice. "With such a quick sleight"

was the blow given, so swiftly did the striker retrace his flying steps, that no man could touch him before he joined his brothers. After the fight was over, in which they slew four of their enemies, Kari and the rest measured Skarphedinn's leap with their spear shafts, "and it was twelve ells," or about *twenty-four feet*. Achilles himself, I think, could hardly have been more "able-of-foot."

We now come to a most interesting and curious chapter in the story, "Of the Change of Faith." King Olaf Trygvesson reigned in Norway, and was getting his people christened right and left at the point of the sword. There was just the alternative "to accept Christianity or to fight;" and against a king with a strong army at his back the latter was the less desirable choice. So throughout all King Olaf's dominions, from farthest Norland to the Western Isles, missionaries were busy with the cross in one hand and the sword in the other. Iceland, as the reader may perhaps need to be reminded, was independent of Norway, having been colonized about a century before this by emigrants impatient of "the overbearing of Harold Haarfagr," the fair-haired king, who first taught the Norsemen that the sovereign must be "aut Cæsar aut nullus." The mother-country, however, still kept up its connexion with the new republic, and took an interest in its affairs. King Olaf, therefore, was anxious that Iceland should enjoy the benefits of the new faith as well as his own realm; and having a troublesome domestic chaplain whom he was fain to be rid of, he honoured him with this mission, as is sometimes done in our own times in analogous cases. This reverend gentleman's name was Thangbrand, a son of Willibald, count of Saxony, described in the Saga of King Olaf as "a passionate, ungovernable man, and a great manslayer; but a good scholar and a clever man." Accompanied by another competent manslayer, Gudleif by name, Thangbrand sailed to Iceland, and commenced preaching and fighting, having no scruple in running men through the middle, or chopping off their arms, if they contu-

maciously opposed his teaching. Muscular Christianity, it will be seen, is by no means a modern invention. It does not surprise us to hear that Njal and all his house took the new faith; nor that "he went often alone away from other men, and muttered to himself."

Within three years the new faith had made considerable progress; and when the Althing met on the 24th of June, A.D. 1000, the numbers of Christian men and heathens seem to have been pretty well balanced. Both parties were drawn up in battle array, and there must have seemed little hope of a peaceable solution of the great question that divided them. The Christian men had chosen a new Speaker of the law for themselves, Hall of the Side, the first Icelandic convert, and a very noble man. He went to the old speaker, Thorgeir, the Lightwater priest, and asked him to utter what the law should be. Instead of "hearing counsel," and having "adjourned debates," this is what the old speaker did:—"He lay all that day on the ground, and spread a cloak over his head, so that no man spoke with him":—a most Socratic style of going to work, and really very judicious! Next day he summoned them all together, and asked them if they would hold to the laws which he was to utter. They promised to do so, and pledged themselves with an oath. Then said Thorgeir:—

"This is the beginning of our laws, that all men shall be Christian here in the land, and believe in one God, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, but leave off all idol-worship, nor expose children to perish, and not eat horseflesh. It shall be outlawry if such things are proved openly against any man; but, if these things are done by stealth, then it shall be blameless."

"But all this heathendom was all done away with within a few years' space, so that those things were not allowed to be done either by stealth or openly."

"Thorgeir then uttered the law as to keeping the Lord's day and fast days, Yuletide and Easter, and all the greatest highdays and holidays."

"The heathen men thought they had been greatly cheated; but still the true faith was brought into the law, and so all men became Christian here in the land."

Was ever any great revolution more simply and well managed? The whole question of a nation's faith and laws referred by an assembly of hot and eager men to the decision of one wise head; and they swear to stand by it, and keep their oath. Well might the historian call the proposal "most hazardous;" but, seeing how it fared, we may doubt if a show of hands or a vote by ballot would have been equally wise or satisfactory. Making all allowance for individual influence and respect for law, there is something wonderful in the whole transaction. For these people, it must be remembered, were not a set of docile savages, but a community of intelligent and vigorous minds, very tenacious of their own ways and customs.

We now come to the most painful episode in the story, the slaying of gentle Hauskuld, the Whiteness Priest, son of Thrain, whom Njal had taken home after his father's death and fostered as one of his own sons. This, I confess, is the only homicide of Njal's sons for which I have no excuse or sympathy; an unmitigated crime, which, if not justifying the retribution that overtook their house, at least subdues the indignation with which one contemplates their subsequent fate. Now comes into full play that evil spirit of the drama—Mord Valgard's son, the envious and guileful son of a crafty and wicked father. The old man has come back from Norway to find the whole face of things altered by the new faith; and we are introduced to him and his son as they sit and brew the poison that works death and ruin in the rest of the story. Mord carries out too well his father's diabolical instructions; and the end of his machinations is, that on a fine spring morning, when the sun had just risen, as Hauskuld goes out to sow his corn, with sieve in one hand and sword in the other (significant of the times), Skarphedinn springs up from behind a fence, and hews at him. The blow comes on his head, and as he falls on his knees, he cries, "God help me, and forgive you!"

This cruel deed creates a terrible sensa-

tion. No man is more sad and troubled at it than old Njal, who loved Hauskuld as a father, and knows by his gift of foresight that this murder will work woe to himself and his house. Hauskuld had married Hildigunna, niece of Flosi, the great chief of Swinefell, a proud and high-spirited dame, as are most of them in this story. Her uncle visits her now, and she receives him well. After the men sat down to meat, she comes in and throws back her hair, and weeps. Flosi comforts her, and says he will follow up her suit to the utmost limit of the law. But that is not enough for the grim-spirited widow. She goes and unlocks her chest, and takes out her husband's cloak, Flosi's gift, which she has kept there, all bloody as it was, since the morning of his death. Dinner is just over, and she goes silently up to Flosi and flings it over him rattling with gore, saying that she now gives it back to him, and adjures him by the might of Christ, and by his manhood, to take vengeance for her husband's wounds. Flosi hurls over the cloak back into her lap, calls her "hell-hag," and says "women's counsel is ever cruel." So stirred was he in spirit that "sometimes he was blood-red in the face, and sometimes ashy pale as "withered grass, and sometimes blue as "death." For the brave man now felt that he was bound to take up the part of avenger, and to be relentless against his will. So, when the case comes in due course before the Thing, and a triple fine is awarded in atonement for the good Hauskuld, and it is freely paid down, the great Flosi spurns the money from him with contemptuous words, and says that Hauskuld shall either be unatoned or be avenged. And Njal fares heavily home with his sons; while Flosi gathers a band of 120 men for an attack on Bergthorskknoll.

Now we hear of portents seen and heard, betokening a dreadful catastrophe at hand. A man looking out on the Lord's-day night sees a fiery ring in the west, and within the ring a rider black as pitch, mounted on a gray horse, who rode hard, and sang with a mighty voice a song of doom. In his hand was a

flaming firebrand, which he hurled into the fells before him, and he vanished in the blaze. And Njal as he sits to meat has a "second sight;" the gable wall is down, and the white board before him is one sheet of blood. All thought this strange but Skarphedinn, who bids them not be downcast, nor utter unseemly sounds, so that men might make a story out of them. "For," says the true Norseman, "the most soldierlike of men," "it befits us surely more than "other men to bear us well, and it is "only what is looked for from us." Doesn't that remind one of another Njalson, and his "England expects"?

And now Flosi and his men are at hand, having mustered from far Swinefell on the Lord's-day, and duly "said their prayers." As they drew near Bergthorskknoll, they tether their horses in a dell, and after the evening is well spent, they go slowly up, keeping close together. Njal stands out of doors in array to meet them, with his sons, and Kari, and his house-carles, in all, about thirty men. Flosi halts his men to take counsel. Njal proposes to retire in doors, against the advice of Skarphedinn, who is unwilling to be stifled in doors like a fox in his earth. Burning houses over people's heads, horrible as it appears to us, was not an uncommon practice then in extreme cases. The old man's counsel prevails, Skarphedinn remarking that his father is now "fey," and that it is as well to humour him and be burned with him. Then he said to Kari, "Let us stand by one "another well, brother-in-law, so that "neither parts from the other." "That "I have made up my mind to do," says Kari; "but, if it should be otherwise "doomed—well! then it must be as it "must be, and I shall not be able to "fight against it." "Avenge us and "we will avenge thee, if we live after "thee," says Skarphedinn. Kari said so it should be. A pregnant little conversation, embodying in few words the chief points of the Norseman's practical philosophy. Now, the fighting began; and Njal's sons and Kari slay and wound many men with their spears,

while the besiegers could do nothing. Then Flosi says, this will never do, and there is nothing for it but to set fire to the house; "and that is a deed which we shall have to answer for heavily before God, since we are Christian men ourselves; but still," he concluded, "we must take to that counsel."

The description of the burning is terribly graphic and affecting; not a touch of "fine writing" in it, but the perfection of simplicity. Our "Own Correspondents" should study it; their brilliance is very admirable, but this Saga-man beats them to sticks at painting. For he never once looks round to see if we are stunned by his performance; his eye is fixed on the scene before him: his only care is to tell exactly what he sees, not to electrify us by what he says. Let us hear him:—

"Then Flosi and his men made a great pile before each of the doors, and then the women folk who were inside began to weep and to wail.

"Njal spoke to them and said, 'Keep up your hearts, nor utter shrieks, for this is but a passing storm, and it will be long before you have another such; and put your faith in God, and believe that he is so merciful that he will not let us burn both in this world and the next.'

"Such words of comfort had he for them all, and others still more strong.

"Now the whole house began to blaze.

"Then Flosi went to the door and called out to Njal, and said he would speak with him and Bergthora.

"Now Njal does so, and Flosi said—

"I will offer thee, Master Njal, leave to go out, for it is unworthy that thou shouldst burn indoors."

"I will not go out," said Njal, "for I am an old man, and little fitted to avenge my sons, but I will not live in shame."

"Then Flosi said to Bergthora—

"Come thou out, housewife, for I will for no sake burn thee indoors."

"I was given away to Njal young," said Bergthora, "and I have promised him this, that we would both share the same fate."

"After that they both went back into the house.

"What counsel shall we now take?" said Bergthora.

"We will go to our bed," says Njal, "and lay us down; I have long been eager for rest."

"Then she said to the boy Thord, Kari's son—

"Thee will I take out, and thou shalt not burn in here."

"Thou hast promised me this, grandmother," says the boy, "that we should never part so long as I wished to be with thee; but methinks it is much better to die with thee and Njal than to live after you."

"Then she bore the boy to her bed, and Njal spoke to his steward and said—

"Now shalt thou see where we lay us down, and how I lay us out, for I mean not to stir an inch hence, whether reek or burning smart me, and so thou wilt be able to guess where to look for our bones."

"He said he would do so.

"There had been an ox slaughtered, and the hide lay there. Njal told the steward to spread the hide over them, and he did so.

"So there they lay down both of them in their bed, and put the boy between them. Then they signed themselves and the boy with the cross, and gave over their souls into God's hand, and that was the last word that men heard them utter.

Such is the end of Njal and his brave wife. Skarphedinn and Grim likewise perish in the flames; while Kari, by a bold leap from the blazing rafters, contrives to escape unpursued. Flosi and his band stayed by the fire till daylight, when a man comes riding up and tells them that he and his neighbour Bard have met Kari; "and his hair and his upper clothes were burned off him." "Had he any weapons?" asks Flosi. "He had the sword 'Life-killer,' and one edge of it was blue with fire, and Bard and I said that it must have become soft; but he answered thus, that he would harden it in the blood of the sons of Sigfus and the other Burners." And right truly did he fulfil his word! How he pursued the Burners, without slackening, by land and sea, till the measure of his vengeance was full: how he and Thorgerir Craggeir, the worthy inheritor of Skarphedinn's "Ogress of War," engaged all odds without fear, and ever came off victorious: how in Orkney, at Earl Sigurd's, in presence of King Sigtrygg of Ireland, and a hall full of warriors, he smote off the head of Gunnar, Lambi's son, so that it spun on the board, and dabbled the earl's clothes with blood, and the noble Flosi excused the deed; how, also, he ended his slayings by knocking off the head of Kol Thorstein's son in a town of Wales as he was telling out silver, the head still counting "ten" as it

rolled off to the counter; how at last he is shipwrecked at Ingolf's head, and goes right up to Swinefell in the storm, to put Floai's manhood to the proof, and Floai springs up to meet him and kisses him, and they are for ever reconciled; how Floai, grown old, puts to sea in a crazy ship, good enough as he thinks for an old and death-doomed man, and is heard of no more, while Kari marries Hildigunna and becomes the head of a great house: all this must be passed over, and much more on which one would like to touch. There is the great lawsuit against the Burners, all the outs and ins and formalities of which are detailed with singular minuteness. There is also the remarkable and weird episode of the battle of Clontarf, well known in Irish annals, to which Northern heathendom gathered its forces for a last struggle with the champions of the Cross. These interesting things the reader must find and appreciate in the book itself. I hope that I have not done injustice to so unique a work in attempting at all to give any account of its story; I wish only to induce any who have not read it, and who can relish a thing fresh from the bosom of nature, though a nature "stern and wild," to get it and enjoy it for themselves. How the learned and brilliant editor has done his work it is hardly necessary to say: such a subject is not got every day, but such editing is still more rare. The only fault I can find with it is that it leaves

nothing for anybody to say coming after him. Introduction, notes, and appendices are so done as to combine the highest qualities of English prose-writing with a perfect mastery and exhaustion of the whole subject. In speaking of Dr. Dasent's pre-eminent labours in this field, it should not, indeed, be forgotten that his worthy predecessor, Mr. Laing, laid the lovers of Northern literature under deep obligations sixteen years ago by his translation of the *Heimskringla*, a work of much greater extent than the single *Saga of Burnt Njal*. But, valuable and interesting as is the chronicle of Sturleson, the *Njala* has the advantage of being not only of real historical value, but as a story more varied, more sustained in interest, more complete in its structure, than any of the *Sagas* in the *Heimskringla*, or, taking Dr. Dasent as authority, than any other *Saga* that exists.

The editor may well congratulate himself on the comely dress in which he sends forth this strong foster-child of his to the world. Not only has he himself done his part so as to leave nothing to be desired, but all who have contributed to the book—artists, printers, and publishers—deserve a hearty word of praise. One of the latter gentlemen has added an index to the work, than which, the editor is safe in saying, a better never was made. Whoever studies the book will thank him for it.

N.

ELSIE VENNER AND SILAS MARNER: A FEW WORDS ON TWO NOTEWORTHY NOVELS.¹

BY J. M. LUDLOW.

THE year 1861 has had the rare good fortune of witnessing the publication of two remarkable novels—"Elsie Venner"

and "Silas Marner." Each is so striking and typical in its way,—they have so many points of analogy, and so many points of contrast,—that it is worth our while to bestow upon them not only our perusal, but a little of our thought.

"Elsie Venner" is strikingly, typi-

¹ *Elsie Venner*, a Romance of Destiny. By Oliver Wendell Holmes (Macmillan and Co.). *Silas Marner*, the Weaver of Raveloe. By George Eliot (William Blackwood and Sons).

cally American; "Silas Marner" is strikingly, typically English. No Englishman could have brought out for us the everyday middle class provincial life of the Northern States as we find it depicted in "Elsie Venner;" no American could have exhibited that familiarity with the rustic mind in out-of-the-way English parishes which has made Raveloe live before our eyes. In point of mere ability, there is little, if anything (beyond a wholesome English briefness in George Eliot), to choose between the two writers. In point of mere interest and excitement, though the palm may lie in the present case with the American, yet the English authoress has shown on other occasions that she was not to be surpassed. Neither book is a mere novel, but a literary study, carefully thought and worked out. The very choice of study is identical. In both cases it is the reduction of the abnormal to the normal, the bringing back into human fellowship of some exceptional sample of humanity. In both, the growth of some human affection is shown as the means by which the process is carried out. But here the parallelism ceases, and a series of contrasts begins, which, to be fully understood, require some short analysis of both works.

The anomaly which "Elsie Venner" deals with is essentially a physical one. The heroine's mother, three months before her birth, has been bitten by a rattlesnake, but her life has been prolonged till three weeks after that event. We are called upon to believe that by this means the nature of the inferior creature has become grafted upon the human one, both physically and morally, so as to produce, amongst other effects, first, familiarity and impunity in dealing with the "ugly things," as the reptiles in question are most truly called by one of the personages, and an attraction towards them; second, like powers of fascination and repulsion; third, cold absence of human affection, with an instinctive savagery, capable of any crime through simple absence of moral sense. The question is not whether this is a

possible or a probable case; it is that which the author has set before himself to treat, and it would be impossible to treat it more naturally, if I may so say, or more powerfully. Granted the primary hypothesis, not a fault can be found with the superstructure. "Elsie Venner," in his book, fascinates at once and repels us, as much as she is represented to do in life.

In "Silas Marner" on the other hand, the anomaly is essentially a moral one. Silas Marner is indeed odd-shaped, near-sighted, subject to trances; but though these physical details form a necessary part of his history, they are not himself. The anomaly is that of a soul, full of love and of a narrow but fervent faith, driven by sudden misfortune, injustice and betrayal, into utter estrangement from man, and, as it seems, from God.

The first great contrast, therefore, between the two books lies in the difference between the physical and the moral points of view. The one is primarily a study in physiology, the other in ethics. Almost as a necessary consequence, Elsie Venner claims scarcely ever more than our pity, nor is she represented as receiving much more from her fellow personages. Bernard Langdon, who may be called the hero, does not so much as fall in love with her, though she falls in love with him. Yet Silas Marner, even when most unsympathetic, has always hold upon our sympathy. The one writer has chosen his standing-ground out of humanity. He calls upon us to observe how nearly a human being can approximate to a serpent. The other stands within the domain of human nature, and calls upon us to feel how human may be the very failings and habits which seem least so. I doubt if there be in the whole realm of fiction anything more perfect or more touching artistically, more true or more instructive morally, than the exhibition George Eliot makes to us of the well-springs of affection and uprightness which lie beneath Silas Marner's miserliness and misanthropy, and of the mode in which they may at last gush out into life. A comparison

with Balzac's portraits of misers,—master-pieces too in their way,—will easily show how far deeper reaches the observation of the English writer. The frightful reality of Balzac's misers' love for their gold exercises over us a fascination mixed with disgust, like the pathos of a monkey's agony; there is something so like a human affection in it that we writhe as it were under the fellowship with the lower nature which it implies. In Silas Marner, on the contrary, we never lose the sense of human fellowship with the miser; we feel all through that his love for gold is only the stooping of a human love, not its caricature.

Having thus at once grasped hold of our sympathy, the authoress of "Silas Marner" is able pretty nearly to dispense with all adventitious aids. In "Elsie Venner," the writer is obliged to appeal to our imagination under its more sensuous sides. He cannot but make "Elsie Venner" young and beautiful, or she would inspire nothing but sheer repulsion. Who could care for such a serpentoid creature if she were old and ugly? We should turn from her with the same alacrity as from her quasi-kinsman, the *crotalus* itself. So she must be seventeen—"tall and slender, but rounded, with a peculiar undulation of movement"—"a splendid scowling beauty, black-browed, with a flash of white teeth;" with "black hair, twisted in heavy braids," and "black, piercing," "diamond" eyes. She must wear "a chequered dress of a curious pattern, and a camel's-hair scarf, twisted a little fantastically about her;" she must be for ever "playing listlessly with her gold chain," coiling and uncoiling it about her "slender wrist, and braiding it with her long, delicate fingers." Silas Marner, on the contrary, we accept without a murmur as the unprepossessing creature he is—from the first nothing more than "a pallid young man, with prominent, sharp-sighted, brown eyes,"—fifteen years older during the main portion of the story—an old man at the last.

Again, it follows almost necessarily

from the choice of his subject, that Mr. Holmes is carried into a world of stage effects, with "striking" scenes and out-of-the-way characters; though, to do him justice, he has done his utmost, by artistic treatment, to subdue the melodramatic element in them. Who, indeed, would care for a rattlesnake that didn't bite? Who would care for a quasi-rattlesnake who should not act out her savagery? In what familiar associations could she be exhibited but with persons having some kind of affinity to herself? Hence the, in himself, melodramatic scamp, Dick Venner, the half-savage old negress, Sophy, as the almost necessary adjuncts to Elsie; hence the otherwise unnatural character of her relations with her father, with Bernard, as required to bring out her own unnaturalness; whilst the fall of Rattlesnake Ledge, though in nowise required by the exigencies of the story, is felt to be quite in keeping with it. In Silas Marner, on the contrary, nothing is more remarkable than the quiet consciousness of artistic power which has led the authoress to eschew anything melodramatic, at least in all that touches her hero; which has enabled her to produce as much effect by the mere shadowing of possibilities, as others might by the most direct representation of actual events. The robbing of Silas—which one forefeels as the necessary result of his miserliness—though the nearest approach to a "scene" in the book, is reduced, by the most subtle tameness of treatment, almost into a mere accident. Again, the possibility of Dunsie's reappearance after he has stolen Silas Marner's money, hangs over nearly the whole book, while all the while he is quietly lying at the bottom of the pool with his ill-gotten cash. During the great ball at the Squire's, it is almost impossible not to expect that Godfrey Cass's drunken wife will turn up somehow to claim and punish him; she is actually shown to us on her way for the purpose, but only to die in the snow, a pauper unidentified. The unjust accusation brought against Marner seems almost

to call for eventual reparation, but Lantern Court itself disappears instead; and Godfrey Cass's neglect of his lawful daughter is punished in the most rightful but unexpected manner, by her preferring to marry a young blacksmith than to receive recognition from him. And the characters are in like manner generally of the homeliest description; or, if otherwise, they please us just in the inverse ratio of their dramatic effectiveness. Dunsie, the villain of the story, Godfrey the lover, with his opium-eating wife, old Squire Cass, the tyrannical father, are nothing to us in comparison with the inimitable village worthies of the "Rainbow," or Silas himself, or the very unromantic but charmingly-painted Nancy Lammeter, or the most lovable and least intellectual personage of all, Dolly Winthrop. In short, whilst the art of the one writer has been to make us accept the extraordinary, that of the other has been to eschew it. The one has done his best to make the "effective" natural; the other has made the homely, in the truest sense of the word, effective.

Nor is it amiss to observe, that the climax of interest in the one book turns upon death, in the other upon life. It is difficult to imagine the once serpentoid Elsie Venner subsiding into an ordinary wife and mother, still more into a perfectly trusted one; and, accordingly, the primary purpose of the work in bringing her round to fellowship with her true kind, can only be carried out by her heart-break, illness, and death. We only thoroughly feel to her as to a fellow-creature, when we see her at last lying "in the great room, in a kind of state, with flowers all about her, her black hair braided as in life, her brows smooth, as if they had never known the scowl of passion, and on her lips the faint smile with which she had uttered her last "Good night." The whole of this portion of the book is full of pathos and beauty; and it is no slight praise to the author, that, with a subject so difficult to treat, he should have found in himself a reserve of so much power and interest for the catastrophe. But in "Silas Marner," we feel at once that half the

beauty and value of the book were gone, if the change of heart in the weaver were exhibited only to us on his death-bed. The book is essentially a page of life, so complete and satisfying, that we do not care to see the overleaf. And the tender grace of the relations between the awkward foster-father and his wayward foster-child, has a homely pathos of its own, relieved by most cunning touches of a delicate grotesque, which is at least equal to that of the death-bed of Elsie Venner.

I do not quarrel with Mr. Holmes for his choice of subject; still, notwithstanding the delicacy of hand with which he has treated it, one cannot but regret that he should have chosen one which cannot be fully canvassed in general society. Nor has he lessened the regret by his choice of scenery. There is something repulsive to the English mind in the picture of the relation between a young and handsome male teacher and a number of nearly full-grown school-girls. However skilfully handled, such a picture is always sensuous, must often border almost on the prurient. As a warning to ourselves, indeed, against the encouragement of the practice from which it is taken, the picture may be a wholesome one. If such be the effect of it, with a pure and high-minded "young Brahmin" like Bernard Langdon for central figure, what would be the reality, with a coarser but weaker type of man in his place?

But we cannot forget that this search after and study of the singular and exceptional pervades too much the ablest American fictions of the day. "Elsie Venner," the serpentoid, inevitably recalls the fame of Mr. Hawthorne's "Transformation," and that peculiar vein of thought and feeling, fluctuating between the odd and the morbid, which runs through all his novels and tales. It seems as if the ablest American writers were now unable to look ordinary life steadily in the face, to see its beauty and its nobleness, and to depict it with the loving care of the true artist. How to account for this I know not. It is not for want of acuteness in seeing that

ordinary life, nor yet of skill in rendering it; but they do not seem to appreciate it as in itself a sufficient subject of study; they treat it only as a framing or as a background for the abnormal, the improbable, the fantastic. Partly it may be the result of the evil influence of Poe, that most unwholesome compound of sentimentalism and vulgarity, which all Americans, and too many Englishmen, persist in mistaking for genius; partly, perhaps, to the crude botching of the would-be-painters of ordinary life amongst them. Perhaps more than all does it come from this,—that America herself has been now for many years but a stage-effect, of which the secession crisis has shown at last the hollowness; that the lie of slavery, which has stultified from the first her Declaration of Rights, has poisoned all her art as well as all her social life. So long as the "right to wallop one's own niggers" is considered consistent with the constitution of a free country, so long may there well be something diseased in the national mind, which inclines it to the morbid rather than to the wholesome, and which makes its highest fictions studies in human pathology, not broad representations of human life. Having represented thus much as to the at least semi-morbid tinge which colours "Elsie Venner" as a whole, I need not dwell at any further length on its ethics or its theology.

As respects the authoress of "Silas Marner," I think there cannot be a doubt that she has henceforth reached the very *acme* of artistic power among contemporary English novelists, raising

herself to a height which places her, within the sphere of art, not far from that queen of fiction, George Sand herself. The wisest may well pause before forming to themselves any further judgment respecting her. Whilst all may surrender themselves freely for the time to the touching charm of her picture of the unfolding of Silas's blighted nature under the appeals of little Eppie's weakness, and the promptings of Dolly's kindliness, it is difficult, when the charm is shaken off, not to ask oneself some further questions. For instance: in the Dinah of "Adam Bede" she has shown us the working and influence of female religious enthusiasm; in Dolly Winthrop she now shows us the very opposite picture, that of the power of a faith inarticulate, incoherent, wholly unimpassioned. That the two portraits should have come from the same hand, should have been worked out with the same tenderness, with the same success, is of itself a marvel of art. But one cannot help asking whether we are really to take both forms of religious faith as equivalent, the fervent strugglings of the young Methodist with sin, and the gentle suasions to conformity of the old church-woman. And, if the writer's purpose be merely that of fine aesthetic studies of religious faith under its varied aspects, and the inculcation of a calm philosophic indifference to the objects of that faith, all one can hope is, that her art will prove stronger than her purpose, and by its very fidelity to nature will serve to call forth yearnings which it will not satisfy, for truths beyond, below, and above itself.

MR. BUCKLE'S DOCTRINE AS TO THE SCOTCH AND THEIR HISTORY.

BY THE EDITOR.

PART II.

THE WEASEL-WARS OF SCOTLAND AND THE SCOTTISH REFORMATION.

BE the subject that one is discussing what it may, one is sure to find some-

thing or other about it in that terrible fellow, Shakespeare. Here, accordingly, from *Henry V.*, is a passage which may be taken as a summary, from the English point of view, of Scottish History, and of the relations of Scotland to Eng-

land, as far as the fifteenth century. The summary, of course, is not nearly so "scientific" as Mr. Buckle's, but it is rather clever of its kind, and it sticks easily to the memory. Henry and his counsellors are discussing his projected expedition into France, and Henry is insisting on the necessity of leaving in England a sufficient defence against the Scots, who are sure to take advantage of his absence :—

K. Henry. We do not mean the coursing snatchers only,

But fear the main intendment of the Scot,
Who hath been still a giddy neighbour to us :
For you shall read that my great-grandfather
Never went with his forces into France,
But that the Scot on his unfurnished kingdom
Came pouring, like the tide into a breach,
With ample and brim fulness of his force ;
Galling the gleaned land with hot assays ;
Girding with grievous siege castles and towns ;
That England, being empty of defence,
Hath shook, and trembled at the ill neighbour-
hood.

Canterbury. She hath been then more feared
than harmed, my liege :

For hear her but exempl'd by herself,—
When all her chivalry hath been in France,
And she a mourning widow of her nobles,
She hath herself not only well defended,
But taken, and impounded as a stray,
The king of Scots ; whom she did send to
France,

To fill King Edward's fame with prisoner-kings,
And make your chronicle as rich with praise,
As is the ooze and bottom of the sea
With sunken wreck and sumless treasuries.

Westmoreland. But there's a saying, very old
and true :—

*" If that you will France win,
Then with Scotland first begin : "*

For, once the eagle England being in prey,
To her unguarded nest the weasel Scot
Comes sneaking, and so sucks her princely eggs,
Playing the mouse in absence of the cat,
To spoil and have more than he can eat.

Not only is this summary of old Scottish History in relation to England graphic and easily remembered ; but its chances also to be true. Scotland in the fifteenth century *was* of some importance to England ; but chiefly by way of impediment to what England would otherwise have been about, of annoyance left in the rear of England at home, when her face was turned to continental Europe and the rest of the transmarine world as the proper field

for her aggressive exploits. England was the eagle, flying far and wide southwards for prey ; Scotland the weasel, stealing meanwhile to the forsaken nest of the royal bird, and compelling her again and again prematurely to hurry back. There had been a time, indeed, when England had made the conquest of Scotland her main enterprise. But, having come off badly in that affair, she had acquiesced in the continued existence of her tough little partner in the island as apparently a necessary arrangement, and, though not forgetting her feud with the Scots, had made war with them only an episodic part of her activity, in the intervals and in the interest of her larger business. To Scotland, on the other hand, war with England was much more nearly the total substance of the collective national exertion. Not only did the memory of old wrong rankle ; not only was the consciousness of being a Scot identified with the instinct of resistance to England and of repudiation of the English name ; but, from the smaller dimensions of the country and from its geographical position, there was no mode of self-assertion for the Scottish nationality possible except through war with England. Stray Scots might distribute themselves over the Continent, scattering the thistle-down among the nations, and betaking themselves even there by preference to any service that was anti-English ; but for the little country in the mass at home no career of action beyond itself was possible save that which an Englishman, talking to his sovereign, might be excused for describing as the career of a weasel towards its more lordly neighbour.

If, however, by the necessity of circumstances, one *must* be a weasel, one may at all events be a respectable and energetic weasel. Now Scotland in the fifteenth century may claim at least this amount of credit. Although her wars with England, since that great one which had secured her independence, had been but weasel-wars in comparison with those which England had waged on the transmarine arena, they had kept

the nation electric and astir, and they were agencies in its peculiar education and its development for future ends. Not had testimony to Scotland in this respect is borne by Froissart. There are passages also in Shakespeare in which he does retrospective justice to the Scotch during the time of their wars with England, and follows them into their native part of the island with that all-kindly glance which disregarded frontiers and found matter for liking everywhere. Naturally, however, it is to a Scottish poet that we should look for such a representation of the Scot at home as would bring out what was best in him and exhibit his weaselship in the most striking light. And so, at this time of day, there is no Englishman but will willingly complete his notion of the Scot of the fifteenth century by blending with the impressions of the foregoing passage from Shakespeare those of the following from Scott. The time is 1513; the scene is the neighbourhood of Edinburgh. The Scottish host is being marshalled there for its last fatal expedition into England, and the Englishman Marmion is looking on.

Nor less did Marmion's skilful view
Glance every line and squadron through;
And much he marvell'd one small land
Could marshal forth such various band.

The poet then goes on to describe the composition of this various army. There were the heavy-mailed chiefs-at-arms, on their great Flemish steeds, with their spears and battle-axes. There were the younger knights and squires, more lightly armed, on their practised chargers, which they made to wheel and curvet. There were the hardy burghers, on foot, without vizors, plumes, or crests, but with burnished corslets and shining gorgets, and armed with long pikes and two-handed swords, or with maces. Then follows the description of the main bulk of the army, in its three divisions of the Lowland Yeomen, the Borderers, and the Highlanders.

On foot the Yeoman, too, but dress'd
In his steel-jack, a swarthy vest,
With iron quilted well;

Each at his back (a slender store)
His forty days' provision bore,
As feudal statutes tell.
His arms were halbert, axe, or spear,
A cross-bow there, a hagbut here,
A dagger-knife and brand.
Sober he seem'd, and sad of cheer,
As loth to leave his cottage dear,
And march to foreign strand;
Or musing who would guide his steer
To till the fallow land.
Yet deem not in his thoughtful eye
Did aught of dastard terror lie;
More dreadful far his ire,
Than theirs who, scorning danger's name,
In eager mood to battle came,
Their valour like light straw on flame,
A fierce but fading fire.
Not so the Borderer:—bred to war,
He knew the battle's din afar,
And joyed to hear it swell.
His peaceful day was slothful ease;
Nor harp, nor pipe, his ear could please,
Like the loud slogan yell.
On active steed, with lance and blade,
The light-armed pricker plied his trade:
Let nobles fight for fame;
Let vassals follow where they lead,
Burghers to guard their townships bleed;
But war's the Borderer's game.
Their gain, their glory, their delight,
To sleep the day, maraud the night,
O'er mountain, moor, and moor.
Joyful to fight they took their way,
Scarce caring who might win the day;
Their booty was secure.
* * * * *
Next Marmion mark'd the Celtic race,
Of different language, form, and face,
A various race of man.
Just then the Chiefs their tribes array'd,
And wild and garish semblance made
The chequer'd trews and belted plaid;
And varying notes the war-pipes bray'd
To every varying clan.
Wild through their red or sable hair
Look'd out their eyes with savage stare
On Marmion as he pass'd.
Their legs above the knee were bare;
Their frame was sinewy, short, and spare,
And hardened to the blast.
Of taller race, the chiefs they own
Were by the eagle's plumage known.
The hunted red-deer's undress'd hide
Their hairy buskins well supplied;
The graceful bonnet deck'd their head;
Back from their shoulders hung the plaid;
A broadsword of unwieldy length,
A dagger proved for edge and strength,
A studded targe they wore,
And quivers, bows and shafts,—but oh!
Short was the shaft, and weak the bow,
To that which England bore.
The Isles-men carried at their backs
The ancient Danish battle-axe.
They raised a wild and wondering cry,
As with his guide rode Marmion by.

Loud were their clamouring tongues, as when
The clanging sea-fowl leave the fen;
And, with their cries discordant mix'd,
Grumbled and yell'd the pipes betwixt.

This is Scott's description of Scotland in the beginning of the sixteenth century, so far as it might be represented in the army which was about to march to Flodden, there to accomplish in blood and defeat the last act in the struggle between the two nations, merely as nations. Of course, neither is this description nearly so "scientific" as Mr. Buckle's. It is but the work of a poet, a colourist, a man of octosyllabics and of old rubbish palmed off as picturesque. But Scott did really know something about Scotland; and, though Mr. Buckle is quite entitled to say that it was not his part or intention to entertain his readers with any such mere description of old Scottish manners or costume or fighting-gear—that he did not give himself out as a Marston riding along the ranks of the Scottish army and interested in the kind of military array that the barbaric little nation could muster forth, but only as a modern English philosopher looking back through the mist of years and applying himself, amid all that irrelevant confusion of bagpipes, clans, steel-jacks, corslets, Flemish steeds, &c., of which the world has had enough and more than enough from Scott and Company, to the one precise task of investigating the real mechanism of Scottish society, so as to express what was the cardinal fact in it—yet, in my humble opinion, he might have learnt something as to his task, or as to what data he might have to take into account in order to its satisfactory conclusion, from even such an unscientific bit of rhymed pseudo-history as the foregoing. For, in the first place, I miss in Mr. Buckle's account of the Scotch prior to the Reformation any adequate recognition of that which was perhaps, all in all, till then the most deep and massive fact in the national being—the relation of antagonism in which they stood to England, and their intense, ineradicable feeling of that relation. Whoever

knows anything of Scotland must know that the transmitted effects of this old antagonism from the thirteenth to the sixteenth century remain incorporate in the Scottish mind and mode of thinking to this day. Not only do they remain in some quarters in the disagreeable form of an *ignis suppositus*, burning, now and then, the feet of an Englishman, and making him hop, as he walks unwarily over the white ashes; but they remain, I believe, in a more subtle and transubstantiated form in the intellectual habit, the mental style and structure, of most Scotchmen as such—even of those who live among Englishmen, and who would account it a shame and a vulgarity to utter a syllable of that Wallace and Bruce nonsense, as they would term it, in which their coarser compatriots wallow. I may refer to this matter again in speaking of Mr. Buckle's theory, later on in his volume, as to the peculiarity of the Scottish intellect in contrast with the English. Meanwhile it seems that his own philosophy should have taught him that the roots of such peculiarities in the intellect of nations may have to be sought for far back in their historical conditions, and so that, in investigating the Scottish character, he ought to have given larger attention to the martial relations of Scotland to England in the centuries preceding the Reformation than he has given. The chronic war with England which lasted through those centuries was part of the education of Scotland, as indeed it was, though much less, of England too; and as well omit the part of Hamlet from the play of that name, or all mention of Tell from Swiss history, or of Miltiades and Marathon from the history of Greece, as slur over, as Mr. Buckle has done, in a philosophical summary of Scottish history, those weasel-wars of the Scots which ended in Flodden. But, more than that, granting that Mr. Buckle's object was not so much to take account of the external pressure which moulded Scottish society as to describe the mechanism of that society, in whatever way determined, even then such a

bit of rich blotchwork from Scott or any other like poet might have taught him something. It might have taught him that his resolution of the whole science of old Scottish history into a mechanical problem of three bodies, or rather into a much simpler see-saw of two bodies, with a third bestriding the fulcrum, was, despite some truth and some convenience there might be in it, but a miserable rendering of life as it was in Scotland, or as it ever was, or ever could be, in any nation worth its salt. Dissolve, for example, that visionary army which Marmion saw through the community to which it belonged, and what do we behold as the Scotland of the beginning of the sixteenth century? Not a mere slab of slate, as in Mr. Buckle's account, with a symbol for clergy here, a symbol for nobles there, and a symbol for the king in a corner looking at both; but a real country, corrugated by a peculiar geology, clothed with a peculiar botany, and inhabited by a peculiar population of men, numbering perhaps about half a million in all, but diversely distributed, diversely occupied, and full, in every spot and fragment of it, of a thousand impulses, purposes, and singularities. There was a king; there were a score or two of great nobles; there was a clergy holding much of the wealth of the land, and headed by a few great prelates; there was a gentry or lesser baronage, of about a thousand lairds and heads of considerable families. Among these there were combinations and compositions of forces, varying from time to time, and constituting such means of formal government as the nation had. But there was a parliament of a sort, in which burghers also sat; there were law-courts; there was a rude commerce and industry; there were schools and universities; there was a whole life of ordinary household vicissitudes and struggles, in which men and women were reared, and through which the teachings and the ceremonies of Holy Mother Church, which had all in its grasp, ran like red threads in the more sombre web. There were the darker

superstitions of old Teutonic and Celtic heathenism still unsuppressed; there were crimes and ghastly deeds which spread terror through neighbourhoods, and passed into traditions of horror; and, from the top of society to its lowest depths, there was perhaps more than the average percentage of shrewd heads, fervid hearts, and tongues of ready rhetoric. Nay, there were the beginnings of art, architectural and decorative; printing had been introduced; and they were actually beginning, poor souls! to cultivate literature on their little oatmeal. Not only were there the old popular songs and ballads, and the old chronicles and uncouth epics, but men, tuneful and educated, here and there were beginning to speak of Phœbus and the month of May, and to write what might pass in any literature as real poems. Nor was it all done on oatmeal. Old Hector Boece, in Bellenden's translation, tells a different story. "Qhuare our eldaris had "sobriete, we have ebriete and dronkines; qhuare they had plente with sufficence, we have immoderat coursing with superfluite, as he war maist noble and honest that culd devore and "swelly maist, and, be extreme diligence, serchis sa mony deligat coursis that they provoke the stomok to "ressave mair than it may sufficientlie degest. And nocht allenarie may "surfet dennar and sowper suffice us "above the temperance of oure eldaris, "bot als to continewe oure shamefull "voracite with dubble dennars and "sowparis. Na fishe in the se, nor "foule in the aire, nor best in the wod, "may have rest, but socht heir and "thair to satisfy the hungry appetit "of glotonis. Noct allenarly ar "winis socht in France, bot in Spaine, "Italy, and Greece; and, sumtime, baith "Aphrik and Asia socht for new delicus metis and winis to the samin effect. Thus is the world sa utterly "socht that all maner of droggis and "electuaris that may nouris the lust and "insolence of pepill are bocht in Scotland with maist sumptuous price, to na "less dammage than perdition of the

"pepill thereof; for, throw the immoderat gluttony, our wit and reason as sa blindit within the presoun of the body, that it may have no knowledge of heviny things." Above all, the whole nation, whether those who fed on the oatmeal only, or those who regaled themselves on Boece's "delicious metis and winis," and used his "dreggis and electuaris," swam and rioted in a sea of humour. There was laughter everywhere, rollick everywhere; everything that was said or done was dashed and edged with humour; indignation itself, murderous revenge itself, whatever was most earnest that man thought or felt, through all and round all played an element of demoniac mirth.

There was a jolly beggar, and a-beggin' he was boun',

And he took up his quarters into a landwart town;

And we'll gang nae mair a-rovin',
a-rovin' in the nicht,

And we'll gang nae mair a-rovin', boys,
let the moon shine ne'er sae bricht;

And we'll gang nae mair a-rovin'.

This is the first stanza of a song written by a Scottish king, James V., whose life is said to have illustrated it; and there is much in it of the mood of his contemporary countrymen. When the same king was on his death-bed, in 1542, news was brought to him that his wife had just borne him, not an heir, but an heiress, to his throne—the future Mary, Queen of Scots. "It cam wi' a lass, and it will gang wi' a lass," were the words of disappointment with which he received the news, referring to the way in which the crown had come into the Stuart line, through a female; and then, turning to the wall, he died in sulks. Humour in life; humour in death; humour in king, in priests, in people!

Into this little country, as into other countries of the north, came the Protestant Reformation. In all modern historical literature of any pretence to ability there is no such insipid hash, no such dish of chopped straw and cold water, as Mr. Buckle makes of this event of Scottish History, its causes, and its

consequences. As is his habit, he clearly states his proposition on the subject before entering on its elucidation. "To bring the question [of the disastrous influence of the Church-power in Scotland in later times] clearly before the mind of the reader, it will be necessary," he says, "that I should give a slight sketch of the relation which the nobles bore to the clergy in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, and of the way in which their relative position and their implacable hatred of each other brought about the Reformation. By this means we shall perceive that the great Protestant movement, which in other countries was democratic, was, in Scotland, aristocratic. We shall also see that in Scotland the Reformation, not being the work of the people, has never produced the effects which might have been expected from it, and which it did produce in England."

Redeeming this promise in a special chapter, he carries his one pet fact of the antagonism between the Catholic clergy and the nobles, and the alliance of the Crown with the former, through the successive reigns of the Scottish Stuarts, from that of James I. (1406—1437) onwards to that of the above-mentioned James V. (1513—1542); holding it up, lamp-like, to illuminate the obscure labyrinth of Scottish history, as the purblind chroniclers present it, during those hundred and thirty-six years. As it flashes on recess after recess of the labyrinth, we have the continuity of things revealed to us in such phrases of emphasis as these—culled here, for the sake of brevity of form, from the analytical table of contents:—"Early in the fifteenth century the alliance between the Crown and the Church against the nobles became obvious." "The Crown, in its efforts against the nobles, was encouraged by the clergy; and, before the middle of the fifteenth century, the Church and the aristocracy were completely estranged from each other." "In 1528 James V. escaped" [from the clutches of the nobles]; "the Crown and the Church regained the ascendant,

"and the principal nobles were banished. From this moment the nobles hated the Church more than ever: their hatred brought about the Reformation. Active measures of the Government against the nobles: the nobles revenged themselves by becoming Reformers. James V. on the other hand, threw himself entirely into the arms of the Church. As the nobles took the opposite side, and as the people had no influence, the success or the failure of the Reformation in Scotland was simply a question of the success or failure of the aristocratic power." Such is Mr. Buckle's swift view of the way in which Scotland drifted into the Reformation. What of John Knox? the reader will naturally ask. O, Mr. Buckle knows all about John Knox! Here it is, by way of continuation of the foregoing:—"In 1542 the nobles openly refused obedience to James V., and their treatment of him at this critical period of his life broke his heart. Directly he died they regained authority. The clergy were displaced, and measures favourable to Protestantism adopted. In 1546 Cardinal Beaton was assassinated, and Knox began his career. Subsequent proceedings of Knox: While Knox was abroad the nobles established the Reformation. He returned to Scotland in 1559, by which time the struggle was nearly over. In 1559 the Queen-Regent was deposed; the nobles became supreme; and, in 1560, the Church was destroyed." If the reader would add to this Mr. Buckle's exact estimate of the character of Knox as a man and as a reformer, he will find it given in a paragraph in the text of the volume. He was "fearless and incorruptible;" he "advocated with unflinching zeal what he believed to be the truth;" he possessed "many noble attributes," but "he was stern, unrelenting, and frequently brutal;" he "loved power inordinately," &c. Contemplating which character of John Knox by Mr. Buckle, we should hardly say that Mr. Buckle, among his many remarkable abilities, possesses in any efficient degree that of

painting a historical portrait, or that the science of history in which he is such an adept necessarily includes any great knack in twiggling for oneself or representing to others the physiognomies of dead celebrities. If there is any man of whom, from his life and writings, a portrait might be given in small space that should have all the distinctness and precision of a medallion, it is John Knox. But Mr. Buckle's Knox is at best a kind of blurred photograph of the commoner sort. You see a nose, a stern and somewhat bony face; but the eyes are vacancies, the mouth a hideous slit; and, if you met the real John Knox coming up the Canongate, you would not know him from this premonition of him.

It is a matter of private taste, of one's own self-knowledge and general views of things, whether one shall like John Knox or not, or think him the kind of man with whom one would have been comfortable. And so of his work—of the kind of notion he had of what would constitute a Zion on the earth. There is full liberty of opinion on this subject; and nobody is bound to approve of Knox and his Reformation more than his reason, and the competition for his admiration of other men and other systems known to him, will let him. Mr. Buckle also states what every one acquainted with Scottish History knows to be a fact when he states that Knox did not begin the Reformation in Scotland, but only joined it when it had already begun, and was the chief agent in organizing it and carrying it to its end. He perhaps under-estimates the personal influence of Knox, even so defined; but let that pass, as the discussion of the matter would lead us farther than we can at present go into the vexed question of "general causes *versus* the importance of the individual" in history. Nor is it denied, let it be well understood, that the class-antagonism of the Scottish nobles and the Scottish clergy of the old Church, and the part performed by the Crown in the progress of this antagonism, were facts to which the

historian of the Scottish Reformation is bound to attend, and in the due appreciation of which he would fulfil part of his duty. There are class-antagonisms and class-interests in all societies; the compositions of social forces take this form; the physiologist of any body-politic would find his task impossible unless he might view the life of the community as localized chiefly in these greater ganglia and nerve-centres. The whole language of History proceeds on this supposition. But, all this being admitted, I join issue with Mr. Buckle, and maintain that his general assertion as to the Scottish Reformation is a huge perversion, a moral and historical "whopper." One may assert anything; and there are assertions which so transcend the bounds of evidence that you must recover your breath before you think of disproving them, and even then hardly know how to proceed. I may assert that there is a ball of fresh butter at the centre of the earth, or that the ring of Saturn is composed of whitebait; and it would be the greatest feat in the art of organizing argument to bring a train of effective reasoning to bear crushingly against either assertion. Now, there are assertions, not dissimilar in their power of benumbing and flabbergasting one, but yet within the bounds of sane and perfectly orderly plausibility, for which our language wants a name. Paradox is too hackneyed a term. They ought to be called Buckleisms. When a man makes an assertion clean in the teeth of all previous belief, and makes it coolly, fluently, without proof, and yet as if contradiction were impossible—that is a Buckleism. When a man makes an assertion of the same kind, and then, by way of proof, simply drags the assertion in a narrative manner through a pond of facts and quotations accumulated from books, some of which, of course, are entangled in the assertion, and brought up adhering to it, so that they may then be hung from it horizontally, in prepared shreds of erudition, like dried fish from a fish-line, while no one can tell what abundance of facts remained behind that did not and would not ad-

here to the assertion at all—that also is a Buckleism. Finally, when a man makes an assertion of a historical nature on the faith of a certain stock of philosophical ideas, out of which such an assertion may be derived by way of preconception, and when the assertion turns out, on inquiry, not only to be inconsistent with facts, but to involve such a mean judgment of men and things foregone, such a contempt for all that preceded our noble selves and did not live in the blaze of *our* lights, such a desecration of ancient graves hitherto honourable, that the mind reacts almost angrily against the creed that could have bred it, and cries, "If this creed be true, what is man but gas and blubber?"—that also is a Buckleism. In almost all these respects the assertion that the Reformation in Scotland was the work of the nobles, that "the great Protestant movement which, in other countries, was democratic, was, in Scotland, aristocratic," is a typical Buckleism. It is directly in the teeth of all existing historical beliefs; for the universal statement hitherto has been that the difference between the English and the Scottish Reformation consisted precisely in this, that the Scottish was the more popular and democratic. The proofs alleged for it are of the kind that could be adduced for any preconception whatever by hauling it as a drag through an appropriate miscellany of facts. It springs from one of the articles of a peculiar and narrow creed, constituting the intellectual capital and means of action of a very able man; and it so jars with facts, and what we have been accustomed to regard as our finer instincts, as to produce a disgust of that creed stronger than is at all necessary, and a state of sentiment towards its possessor too impatient by far, and not just to his real merits.

Does Mr. Buckle really believe that his precious fact of the class-antagonism of the clergy and the nobles, even if his representation of that fact were perfectly correct at all points (which it is not), could possibly be an adequate explanation of the adoption by Scotland of the Reformation which had been

generated on the Continent, or of any tantamount act of collective moment ever done by any nation? If so, I arraign him in the name and in the interest of that very Science of History whose livery he wears. I arraign him as intellectually not up to the mark of the Science to which he boasts his attachment, as not yet emancipated at heart from the dregs of that mean mode of thought in historical matters which it has been the aim of the new Science of History, and the pride of its best teachers, to scout and pursue to extinction—that mode of thought of which the lines of Goldsmith in his ballad of the Mad Dog are no inapt expression—

"The dog, to gain some private end,
Went mad, and bit the man."

One had fancied it to be one of the good results of the new Science of History, as taught by Comte and others, that, however one might differ from their total view of the Science and think it incomplete—however some sentimental souls might object to a theory of human affairs which made all to consist in an evolution of elements purely terrestrial, and might cling to some form of the dear old hypothesis which supposed that there might be comings and goings between the visible sphere and a world of the metaphysical, touches terrestrially incalculable and wrenches terrestrially unaccountable of the human will, whisperings of unearthly voices to solitary hearts, or, at least, (should there be absolute necessity for making the language of the hypothesis still purely physical,) blasts cosmic and influences sidereal, acting prodigiously on the human nerve, but defying investigation—yet the "dog-going-mad-for-private-ends" theory of social changes had been banished and disgraced out of all minds of culture. One had fancied that, if one might no longer talk legitimately of *revolution* in human affairs, but only of *evolution*, yet in this word "evolution" it was implied that every variation of the life or thought of a community from moment

to moment was an organic process of the whole being of the community down to its last minim and tittle; that every social change was a necessary heaving-forward of the whole community, prompted by a feeling of new needs and uses irreconcilable with its late conditions; and, consequently, that, though the historian, in describing such movements, must, by the very necessity of his craft, regard the social life as lodged chiefly in certain central organs, and make much of the mechanical arrangements and conflicts of parties, yet it would be at his peril if he failed to indicate, through these, the complexity of underlying causes and connexions. One had fancied all this; and, now, to find Mr. Buckle, of all men, among the old stagers!

To refute Mr. Buckle's assertion fully, on the more palpable ground of its inconsistency with actual Scottish history, would require a sketch, step by step, after him, of the process and manner of the Scottish Reformation. This is, of course, impossible here; but should the reader desire to see *some* account of this portion of Scottish history, with which he may compare Mr. Buckle's, I may refer him to that with which Robertson introduces his *History of Scotland during the Reigns of Queen Mary and James VI.* I mention this sketch, not because it seems to me to be up to the level of the subject, but because it is easy to be had, and because, Robertson being a man whose views were rather low-pitched, it is yielding a positive advantage to Mr. Buckle to adduce *his* narrative for the purpose of comparison. I believe that the reader of Mr. Buckle's volume who shall turn from it to those pages of Robertson will be somewhat surprised. He will be surprised, in the first place, to find how like Mr. Buckle's essay—which, from Mr. Buckle's manner, and his immense array of authorities, one might suppose to be a perfectly original condensation of Scottish history, an extraction, for the first time, of its very oil and quintessence, by the application of high scientific pressure to whole tons of materials—how like this

essay is to a mere dilution of Robertson, slightly thickened by additional references. He will find in Robertson an exposition of the antagonism of the Crown and the nobles, as a standing fact in Scottish history from the time of Robert Bruce to that of James V., and a farther exposition how this last-named king, in prosecution of the policy of his ancestors, allied himself to the Church. He will find, also, a distinct appreciation of the share of the nobles in furthering the Reformation, and of the extent to which they were actuated therein by class-antipathy and greed for the Church-lands. But, with all this, Robertson could not, like Mr. Buckle, resolve the Reformation into any mere result of such agencies. He even apologizes for dwelling so much upon them, on the ground that a view of "the political motives alone" which influenced the Scottish Reformers might have some value in obviating a special misconception; and, if he does not do full justice to "religious considerations," he by no means omits them. To his narrative, accordingly, we may refer as really more scientific than Mr. Buckle's, as well as more interesting, and as calculated to supply at least a mild corrective of Mr. Buckle's inadequate views. For ourselves, we can but present a handful of facts and allusions tending to suggest what might be argued at large—that Mr. Buckle's assertion respecting the Scottish Reformation is not a true one, and that the common belief, which regards it as having been rather a popular and democratic movement, at least in comparison with the Reformation in England, is, on the whole, more accurate.

There were Wycliffites or Lollards in Scotland in the fifteenth century; a Hussite preacher or two from Bohemia had also found his way thither; and, on the whole, there was in Scotland, prior to the great Continental revolt of Luther, some amount of that predisposition to a rupture with the Papacy which existed in most northern countries as a compound of such express anticipations of Luther's doctrine by his minor forerunners, and

of the disgust of the secular common sense with the abuses of the old Church-system, so plentifully evidenced everywhere in jests and satires. When time was ripe, therefore, the Reformation which Luther proclaimed, and which involved all the Teutonic countries, involved Scotland among them. It did so by very much the ordinary process. One youthful Scot, of noble birth, named Patrick Hamilton, having gone abroad for his education, and become acquainted with Luther and Melancthon, returned to his native land, preached their opinions, and was burnt at the stake for doing so (1527), crying out, "How long, O Lord, shall darkness overwhelm this realm?" with other such-like common-places of martyrs when the fire scorches them, and the language of advanced science is not to be expected from them. His death, the story goes, "made great impression upon the people, and moved many to inquire into the truth of the articles for which he suffered;" and in a short time there sprang up in different parts of Scotland a largish number of persons marked as more or less of the Reforming belief. These the clergy had to burn, hang, imprison, or drive into exile in England or on the Continent. Not a few of them were priests or friars who had come round to the new faith very much as Luther himself had done. Others were "gentlemen" or "lairds;" and others belonged to the commonalty. Surely it is not inconsistent with the known laws of human nature that the reasonings of such persons with themselves, their preachings, and their example, should be causes of some efficacy in bringing about a moral and intellectual change in the community that contained them. When we hear also that the influence of the contemporary English Reformation was felt in Scotland, that it "raised in all the people a curiosity of searching into religious matters," and that, "partly by reading, partly by brotherly conference, which was very much practised to the comfort of many, but chiefly by merchants and mariners, especially those of Dundee and Leith, who, frequenting other countries,

"heard the true doctrine taught and the vanity of the Popish religion exposed, the knowledge of God did wonderfully increase within the realm," we may, of course, if we like, turn up our noses at the phrases "true doctrine" and "knowledge of God;" but, if we substitute the phrases "Reformed doctrine" and "Anti-Papal sentiment," we need not reject the statement as incredible. At all events, the fact is that, before the death of James V. in 1542, and chiefly through such personal and popular agencies, the Reformed faith had made considerable way in Scotland, principally among the commonalty and the classes immediately above them. Among the converts not yet of public note was John Knox, himself a man of the people. Here and there a noble might be well-affected towards Protestantism, and that seriously and disinterestedly—for surely a noble might be touched by argument as well as another man. Nor can there be any doubt that among the nobles, as a body, then struggling more desperately than ever against the coalition of the King and the Church, there was a large amount of good-will to the new movement, manifesting itself in such ways that Cardinal Beaton and the prelates could charge the bulk of the order as being heretical as well as disloyal. Very far, however, from an adequate representation even of the superficial mechanics of Scottish society at the close of the reign of James V., when the Reformation was first making way there, is Mr. Buckle's resolution of it all into "a combination of parties in a country" "where, there being no middle class, the people counted for nothing." Nay, even after the death of James V., when circumstances were such as to give free scope to the new opinions, and to enable the aristocracy to resume much of their lost authority, we find them in no haste to break with the Papacy. They divided themselves, indeed, into two parties,—an English party, acting in the interest of the scheme of Henry VIII. for a marriage of the infant Queen of the Scots with his son Edward, and a con-

sequent union of Scotland with England, which would necessarily have been ecclesiastical as well as political; and a French party, tending rather to an alliance with France. But, though this division involved the religious question—though the Regent Arran, who was kept in his place by the English party, was for the time an avowed Reformer, and some of the most prominent men of the party, who had been recently prisoners in England, had also adopted the Reformed faith, and though the other party made common cause with Cardinal Beaton, the late minister of James, but who had been ousted from power and imprisoned—yet the division was by no means a mere polarization of opposed religious elements. Nor, such as it was, did it last long. In consequence of the high-handed method of Henry VIII. in urging his scheme, the English party melted away; the whole country relapsed into a patriotic and anti-English fit; the Regent apostatized and came to an agreement with his rival, Beaton; the Reformation lost for a time the support which it had in the state of parties, and had to depend again on "metaphysical aid," on individual energies, on the pulsations of the popular heart. There ensued another period of persecution, during which new martyrs were brought to the stake, including the famous Wishart (1545). Referring to Scotland at this time, and even for five years later, Robertson could speak of the Reformation as having still gained credit "chiefly among persons in the lower and middle rank of life." Nay, Knox himself, looking back upon those days from a time when his work was nearer its consummation, could talk in such language as this before an audience that knew whether he spoke truth or not:—"When we were a few number in comparison of our enemies, when we had neither earl nor lord (a few excepted) to comfort us, we called upon our God; we took *Him* for our protector, defence, and only refuge. Among us was heard no bragging of multitude, of our strength, nor policy; we did only sob to God to have respect

"to the equity of our cause and to the "cruel pursuit of the tyrannifol enemy." After the assassination of Beaton, in 1546, it is true, the time did come in Scotland—first during the continued regency of Arran till 1554, and then during the regency of the Queen-mother, Mary of Guise, from that date onwards—when the Reformation made strong its political connexions. Out of the medley of interests one after another attached itself to this as the progressive cause; this and that noble either threw his weight into it for the first time, or came back to it reassured; and so it devolved on a politico-religious league of nobles and other men of note, styling themselves "the Lords and Brethren of the Congregation," and opposing the Queen-mother and her French troops, to finish the business by a bout of negotiation and of civil war, to cut the connexion between Scotland and the Papacy, and to tumble down the already undermined edifice of the Romish system and worship within the land. In this, however, there took place only what must take place anywhere when a similar revolution has to be effected, and what took place largely enough in the Germanic empire, where the Reformation originated, and in other countries where it spread. I believe also that Scotland presented, even in this stage of the revolution, almost an exceptional instance of the overpowering effect of individual exertions by men of the spiritual order, and of the dispersed popular energy, upon the general conduct of the movement. There were the resolute preachers—the Roughs, the Willocks, the Methuens and others—keeping the doctrines alive for which Hamilton and Wishart had died, and shaping them into the form which nobles and lairds had to accept as their creed, and did accept more or less earnestly; and, above all, from 1555, when Knox returned from his first exile of eight years, there was his vehement spirit, which never feared the face of man, leading, advising, rousing, standing unabashed amid lords and earls, and swaying them right and left. Once again, indeed, Knox left his

native land for a time, as too hot to hold him, and, pursued by a sentence of interdict and outlawry, settled as a pastor in Geneva. Even in exile, however, he continued to be a power among his countrymen; and, in the "Appellation" which he sent over, in 1558, "from the cruel and most unjust sentence pronounced against him by the false Bishops and Clergy of Scotland," we see that *he* at least did not consider the Reformation a matter only of aristocratic concern. After appealing to "the Queen-Regent, estates, and nobility," "as the chief heads for this present of "the realm," and requiring of them that, "in public preaching" he might again "have place among them at large "to utter his mind," he addresses a special appeal to the same effect to "the Commonalty" as such. "Neither would "I," he there says, "that you should "esteem the reformation and care of "religion less to appertain to you "because you are not kings, rulers, "judges, nobles, nor in authority. Be- "loved brethren, you are God's creatures, "created and formed in His image and "similitude, for whose redemption the "most precious blood of the only- "beloved Son of God was shed, to "whom He has commanded His gospel "and glad tidings to be preached, and "for whom He has prepared the "heavenly inheritance, so that you do "not obstinately refuse, and disdainfully "contemn the means which He has "appointed to obtain the same—namely, "His blessed gospel, which he now "offers you to the end that ye may be "saved. For the gospel and glad tidings "of the Kingdom, truly preached, is "the power of God to the salvation of "every believer; which to credit and "receive, you, the Commonalty, are not "less addebt than your rulers and "princes are—for, albeit God hath put "and ordained distinction and difference "betwixt the King and subjects, be- "twixt the rulers and the common "people, in the government and ad- "ministration of civil policies, yet in "the hope of the life to come He has "made all equal." Nor, when Knox

finally returned in 1559, were these words forgotten. He stood by the commonalty then, and they stood by him. In sermon and in counsel he spoke his mind to "my lord Duke, his grace, with his friends"—i. e. to Arran, now Duke of Chatelherault, who had come over once more to head the Reforming side, and to the aristocratic following who had come with him—in language which conveyed but a sorry impression of their real worth to a cause which had made its first progress without them, and of which he prophesied that, "whatever should become of the mortal carcases" of himself and others, it would, "in despite of Sathan, prevail in the realm of Scotland." And so, in the last triumph of that cause, the commonalty did contribute, if only by those iconoclastic tumults which then, as now, formed the only mode of expression open to a commonalty as such, and which, in this case, were so violent that he had to check them.

So completely in the teeth of all prior accounts of the Scottish Reformation is Mr. Buckle's assertion respecting it that what the old Presbyterian historians of Scotland always guard against is an accusation exactly the reverse. "Adversaries would have it believed," says the old Presbyterian historian, Stevenson, in his introduction to his *History of the Church and State of Scotland*, "that this Reformation was tumultuary and effected by the dregs of the people, without any lawful call; but, granting, for the sake of argument, that the populace were the great, or, let us suppose, the only instruments of the Reformation, that had been their glory, not their shame. For, when the safety of the whole is in danger, nature teacheth," &c. In short, the poor old gentleman goes on to argue that the commonalty had right and reason to do as they did; and then he adds, with all his industry, out of the peerage-book and baronage-book of Scotland, such a list of earls, lords, lesser barons and gentlemen, notable partisans of the Reformation, as might, he thinks, prove that the movement was not wholly

plebeian. Had he foreseen the advent of Mr. Buckle as an interpreter of Scottish history, he might have saved himself, the trouble.

Whatever was the historical process of the Scottish Reformation, its character and its effects, as an achieved fact, were singularly democratic. I do not know how it is, but very few Englishmen seem to be aware of the immense, the almost preponderant, share of power and influence assigned to the popular or lay element in the constitution of the Kirk of Scotland. The Kirk of Scotland, as Knox designed it, and as it has always been, except in intervals of compulsory change to Episcopacy, never was an organization of clergymen only, but of clergymen and representative laymen. Take the *First Book of Discipline*, prepared by Knox and his associates as a standard for the rule and government of the new Kirk, and what do you find? That, with the exception of certain leading clergymen, who were to act as superintendents of districts or provinces—but who were carefully discriminated from the bishops of the old system—all the clergy were to be equal as ministers of parishes and congregations; that "it appertaineth to the people and to every singular congregation to elect their minister;" that this right of every several congregation "to have their votes and suffrages in the election of ministers" must be carefully conserved, and that, in order to its due exercise, if it should chance that, by the neglect of a congregation to elect a minister for themselves, it should devolve on the superintendent and his council to name one for them, then the person so named should appear and expound before the congregation, that they might judge of him, and accept or reject him. Moreover, in every parish or congregation there was to be, besides the minister, a certain number, varying with circumstances, of laymen, styled "elders and deacons," selected once a year from the parishioners or congregation by the minister and the people between them, as "men of best knowledge of God's Word and cleanest life." These

were to be ecclesiastical office-bearers along with the minister, forming a kind of court with him for transacting the church-business of the parish, but also assisting him in the work of reading, teaching, and religious admonition. Nay more, these laymen, the parish-assessors of the minister, were also to have a right of vigilance over him. They were to "take heed to his life, manners, diligence, and study;" "if he be worthy "of admonition they must admonish "him; of correction, they must correct "him; and, if he be worthy of deposition, they, with consent of the "Kirk and Superintendent, may depose "him,"—the manner of process in this extreme case being indicated, and the faithfulness of the elders and deacons to their general duty of vigilance farther secured by their obligation once a year to report to the superintendent of the conduct of their minister and even of his family. Although these ordinances of Knox and his associates for the government of the Kirk which they had founded fell into abeyance in this exact form, they remained as a tradition; and, when the Kirk was fully formed, not only was the parity of the clergy among themselves more stringently secured by the abolition of the Superintendents, but a more regular organization was given also to that systematic conjunction of the lay-element with the clerical, in the entire working and procedure of the Kirk, which Knox had prescribed. The Kirk-session, or local ecclesiastical court in every parish, still consisted of the minister and several lay-elders; the Presbytery, or ecclesiastical court for each cluster of contiguous parishes, consisted also of lay-elders along with the ministers; the Synod, or ecclesiastical court for a large province or district of country, actually contained a preponderance of lay-elders; and the General Assembly, or national ecclesiastical Parliament, consisted of deputies from the Presbyteries, both lay and clerical, though here with an excess of the clerical. Recollecting all this, one is surely entitled to say that the Reformation in Scotland, whatever it

may have been in its origin, was hugely democratic in its issue. Mr. Buckle's assertion is that the people of Scotland have been perhaps the most priest-ridden people on the face of the earth. Should he ever do his work over again, I would advise him to try a somewhat different assertion, and say that, of all clergies on the face of the earth, the clergy of Scotland have been and are the most people-ridden. The assertion might be able to rest itself in a deeper show of facts, and much more might be made of it as a key to the past history and the present intellectual state of Scotland.

I do not yet make the assertion myself. That part of my task where it would be necessary to explain in what sense it might be made, is yet to come. I am moving on to a point where I shall be able to express a good deal of agreement with Mr. Buckle. But between that point and the point which even now I have reached there intervenes still a tract over which I have to accuse him, as hitherto, of historical misrepresentation, of most meagre philosophy in some essential matters, of unjust vilification of men whose bones have long been under the earth in many a Scottish moor, hill-side, and kirkyard, but whose souls, though tongueless to answer him, yet live in us and about us. This kind of criticism is not to my taste. I hope I am one of those who, in literature, have come to the conclusion that it is best, in most cases, never to mind what is done, as one thinks, wrongly by others, but only to do as well as one can oneself. I know also that this writing about the peculiarities of a country which one may be supposed to care for personally more than enough, is apt to nauseate if long continued. But there are cases in which direct opposition is necessary; and the English, loving their own country and its fair fame, are too generous a people to resent even a little excess of speech in their hearing in defence of another, if only the defence shall seem to be called for and to be not uncandidly undertaken.

IN PRAISE OF GRANDMOTHERS.

OF dear old things, what one is dearer than a dear old granny?

Not that the subject of my praise need wait till she be downright old to merit it. You, yourself, good reader, have sometimes seen, as I have, and with the same admiration of her still winsome beauty, a young grandmother.

Pink bud and fragrant flower and pale-gold fruit, upon one lemon-bough, in an Italian summer, group not among the green leaves in more complete and yet suggestive harmony than do the sweet faces of three generations—the baby girl's, her girlish mother's, and the mother's of the girl-wife—among the nestling greeneries of an English home. Not that I forbid my reader's imagination or his memory to cross Tweed northwards, or the Bristol Channel towards the west. I do not lay embargo upon any ship of thought or fancy, adventuring beyond the four seas of Great Britain, to seek for such a group among the *tableaux-vivants* of the world. Painted where it may be by Nature's hand, the picture has a special and a constant charm. But the fresh hues, the cool tones, the delicate play of lights and shadows, which are wanted for its perfection, are found most often under our own moist and fitful skies. Where the fierce kisses of the sunbeam bring out even the pale juice of the lemon in gold upon its rugged skin, granny's cheek tans and wrinkles early and deep. It will only show in startling contrast against the young mother's and her new-born child's. I do not forget what attractions such contrast has for an artistic eye. And, in themselves, the features of the Southern grand-dame, grooved, lapped, and folded, and burnt bistre-brown, will often have a weird magnificence. Maybe, no more than seventy summers have wrought the texture and colour of face, neck, and arms, to what we see them; yet, in looking on her, we seem to feel that centuries are long, more

vividly than when we gaze upon the sun-stained marble ruins among which her sheep browse, or upon the ribbed rind of the cork-tree, under whose shade she spins. She has strange eyes, by times—not bleared nor dim, but glowing, in their undiscerned depth, as if with stored heats of all those by-gone summers. "Old" is not the word for her. She is antiquity alive. Do you not recognize her? Joab fetched her from Tekoah, because she was "a wise woman." That turbulent soldier-son of Zeruiah felt that a craftier physiognomist than he should scan the angry countenance of David for traces of relenting over Absalom. Those lank arms, desperate, locked Polyxene to those dried breasts; those elf locks, ashen grey, shook at impassable Ulysses, who would lead the maiden to the place of blood! Blood! Ay, those crooked, almost palsied, fingers were dyed red in it, when the false Thracian, that had done her boy to death, fell into her vengeful trap.

Her gait totters not under its load of years—pride steadies it—as she leads the line of women towards the enemy's camp. Let others—Roman matrons, too, his own Volumnia with them—weep and tremble for the fear of him whom they would bend; it is otherwise with Veturia, his own mother. True,

"That, like an eagle in a dove-cote, *he*
Fluttered their Volscians in Corioli;"

But the eaglet was of her own blood, and her own breast had hatched his bravery. *She* was no dove, that his stern eye should flutter *her*. How grand the story reads in Livy! Coriolanus would kiss her withered cheek: "Hold off! Will an enemy's lips touch it, or a son's? Am I captive or mother in this tent? Had I never known birth-pang, Rome had never known disaster! Sonless, I had died a freewoman in a free fatherland!"

Ah, thou little Marcus, with thy

father's bold eyes—clinging to Volumnia's gown, yet half-inclined to go toy with the weapons hanging on the tent-pole—open those bold eyes wide upon thy grandmother! Thou shalt not hereafter persuade the citizens of Rome, it may be, to do full justice, and to consecrate their chapel of commemoration "Fortunæ Anili," rather than "Fortunæ Muliebri," as its dedication runs. Yet none in Rome shall dare to sneer at an "old woman" in thy hearing when thou art grown a man. "Fortunæ Muliebri," "To the Luck of Ladies;" it was, perhaps, something that Roman sediles found heart of grace to write up even that!

All very good in its way, and wholesome castigation, I doubt not, for citizens of Livian Rome; yet I maintain that, in full honesty, the legend on the shrine should have been made to run "Fortunæ Anili,"—"To the luck of Ladies-dowager."

No, my dear madam! Excuse me; though I am a married man, as you justly say, and "might know better." His mother, not his wife, saved Rome. Volumnia would have let him kiss away her tears, reserving to herself the right of a curtain lecture, when the tent curtain should have dropped upon the deputation, though the tent itself should still have stood pitched in enmity against the gate of Rome. Depend upon it, now that she was once more with Coriolanus, she would cling to him outside Rome or in. But Veturia's frown! the striking of the Volscian camp alone could chase its thundercloud away. "Fortunæ Anili" would have told the truth exactly—"Sacred to the luck of Ladies-dowager." I doubt if ever, spite of Coriolanus, those pagan ancients rose to the right appreciation of grannies. Small wonder, if Horace fail to sing their praise, to give them "*suas laudes*;" but I can hardly pardon Cicero.

The pagan rhymester of graceful or disgraceful revelries might well ignore the "*sua laus*" of womanhood, which withers not with age. When only lees are left in emptied amphore, when rose-garlands lie leafless on trampled moss-banks, when barbiton-strings are cracked,

and the notes of the girlish voice that trilled to them, then all is over with the toy that he calls woman. Haghood sets in at once, as the dark Italian night falls suddenly, without a gloaming, upon the roseate sky. Forthwith, out of her love-grot, Pyrrha comes, a crook-backed Canidia, to grope among graves and ruins for other charms than those she lost but now. Long centuries of Christendom must pass, to leaven all the lump of human thought and feeling, before a Bacchanalian bard can set a chaste love-ditty to the piping of a granny's treble, and breathe a tenderness that "Thracian Chloe's" passion knew not, into the crooning of "Auld Jean" by her ingle—

"John Anderson, my jo, John,
When we were first acquent,
Your locks were like the raven,
Your bonnie brow was brent;
But now your brow is bald, John,
Your locks are like the snaw;
But blessings on your frosty pow,
John Anderson, my jo.

John Anderson, my jo, John,
We clamb the hill together;
And mony a cantie day, John,
We've had wi' ane another.
Now we maun totter down, John,
But hand in hand we'll go;
And sleep together at the foot,
John Anderson, my jo."

Well, I forgive the little blear-eyed sipper of Mæcenæ's best Falernian. Let him sing rustic joys in couplets of town polish, lolling on purple cushions, at the most *recherché* dinner-table in Rome. He never was the man to glorify grannies; no, not he. But how shall I pardon Marcus Tullius Cicero?

It was but yesterday that I took up again, with fresh delight, his essay "On Old Age." How comely are his grey-beards, who discourse thereon in good rough Roman language, shaped off by rule of the new-learn't Greek rhetoric! What excellent company are those veterans of well-fought fields! Nestors of debate in a senate still worthy of its name; reverend oracles of the grave college of augurs! Had their talk taken us nowhither with them save into camp, or parliament, or college, we might never have missed what we do miss at

once upon its taking us into their own homes, within or without the city walls. Homes, indeed! what manner of homes be they which women guide not?

"Four stalwart sons, five daughters, a numerous household, a crowd of 'clients,' are shown us grouped around the venerable figure of Appius, old and blind. But why is his Appia missing? Why sits she not among them, locking her faithful hand in that of her partner in life's pilgrimage?

"In that house," writes the essayist, "antique manners and ancestral discipline live in vigour." Why, then, is *she* not there, whose long surviving grace toned down the crudeness of those old-world fashions? the matron whose unflinching tenderness redeemed the harshness of that stern old mastery? Why make no mention of her—not even in one regretful word—if she be gone down first into the realm of Hades?

It ill beseems even a reverend augur, uttering oracular sentences in his old age, thus to forget her who, doubtless, in the ancient Roman, as in the ancient happy Hebrew household, "opened her mouth with wisdom, and in whose tongue was the law of kindness." But if, in his superior conceit of male philosophy, he will pass her by when discussing in the portico, how can he do so, guiltless, when, in the pantry, he will prattle of household—nay, let me write it down at once, of house-wifely cares?

"What more blessed," asks the Roman greybeard, "than the delight which even old age finds ever young in the laughing plenty wherewith the farming life is full? kindly purveyor, as it is, for men's tables, and for the altars of the gods. The good-man's cellar is full, full his oil-jars, full his larder, choke full of pork, of lamb, of kid, of chicken, milk, and cheese, and honey."

Ah, gude-man! how forget the gude-wife so, the douce and sonsie gude-wife, at whose girdle the keys of all those homely treasures clanked ever their best music! We lose patience, don't we, reader, with the thankless dotard, the maundering old "gaffer" that has forgotten "granny?"

I will be bold to say that there were fine old dowagers in Rome no less than dear old grannies at the Campanian farm, from whom these philosophizing elderly gentlemen of Tully's might have learned as lively lessons touching the cheerful, sweet, and noble bearing of Old Age as any they could spell out of a doubtful line from Ennius, or out of a garbled Greek text from Pythagoras. His treatise is an exhortation to the full as much as an essay; it relies, therefore, very much upon example. Now, since humanity is twin, and since the snows of age whiten twin head-crowns, the woman's and the man's, it follows that this teacher by examples suffers the loss of half when he restricts himself to one sex in selecting them. Moreover, the loss is greater when reckoned not by number only, but by weight. And I venture to think not only that he might have found old ladies by the score to cite as patterns of resignation to the troubles of increasing age, but that in them he would have found examples of such resignation heartier and more entire than in persons of his own sex.

"Men carp at old age," says he, "under four heads of reproach." And then he meets each one in turn with counter considerations. "It bars us off from business. True, but not from all. We old men have our place and work yet in the world. And, specially, we have it in the guidance and training of youthful minds. Some say, but they say wrongly, that 'tis the special grievance of the old to know that they are themselves a grievance to all others. A grievance? nay; but a joy. For wise elders, and their worthy youngers, find in each other a mutual delight."

But when I, that pen these lines, would call on memory to confirm this truth by actual experience, the figure that will fill my mind's eye is never other than a noble widowed Lady's. Bowed slightly by the weight of years, how grand was yet the stateliness of her aged form! Its very motion truly told how ten thousand courtesies, worthily paid her by the great and good, had laid up with her a very wealth of courtesies to

dispense. And he to whom she paid one from that store felt humbled, yet uplifted, all in one. Long knowledge of the world had not impaired the guilelessness enthroned upon that aged brow, whose very wrinkles thought, not craft, had evidently pencilled. Not even the film forming on those aged eyes could hide from any that looked into them the truth, and depth, and generous nobility of the great soul, which was still looking out through their darkening windows. And for its tenderness—he must have been indeed poor reader of the human countenance who should have failed to read it in the sweetness of the smile which played around those gracious aged lips. Children, and children's children, friends, acquaintances, dependents, how had a common love, a common gratitude, a common veneration for her, twined one same golden thread into so many strands of so many differing lives!

Ah, me! When that one aged heart-beat ceased utterly, how many were the warm hearts that felt a bitter chill! How many warm hearts quicken even now their beating at any mention of that one so dear and venerable name!

When Cicero vaunts, as he does, the charm of his aged patrician's conversation, of course I can pick no quarrel with the boast in itself, but I never will allow to his talkative old gentleman the monopoly of its possession. Very pleasing and very fruitful, I grant, it is to parley with some yet hale and vigorous doer of the deeds done in our fathers' days, and in the old time before them. Yet, for all that, commend me to the talk of a shrewd, sensible, well-educated old gentlewoman. She cannot quote, indeed, the *quorum ego pars magna fui*, and, so far, the having actual speech of her wants the life-like interest, the power of realization by contact, which may pertain to conversation with her ancient lord. But "lookers-on see most of the game," and keenest observation in the bygone time has laid up most matter for after-remiscences. Ten to one she can give you a truer measure of the men that moved in life's amphitheatre than her husband can, for she

saw them more nearly life-sized all along—not looming so big, for good or evil, as they did to him through the mists of party prejudice. She will colour their portraits, too, more naturally, neither cooling them down with such blue tints of envy, nor warming them up with such crimson of indignation. I speak of male portraits. It misgives me whether the limning of female contemporaries might be quite so fair. Yet, what right have I to make deliberately such an insinuation? Women certainly have their own rivalries with women—it may be uncertain whether they be not fiercer than between men and men—but it is scarcely questionable that they are less lasting. A noble lord may carry on, across the woosack, till he is well past eighty, his life-long duel with some noble antagonistic lord, with whom he first fell out in the playing-fields at Eton, more than half a century ago. Rivals for queenship of beauty contend but in brief campaigns. Blush-roses will scarcely bloom through one long summer. Rivals for queenship of fashion also struggle for a capricious prize, which the laws of the tilting-ground will not allow one same winner to hold long in hand. The change from active to passive life comes earlier and more inevitably to women than to men; and most of them accept with greater frankness and with less reserve the enforced neutrality it brings. This genuine acceptance of their own position is one of the secrets which enable old ladies to win and keep, as old gentlemen can rarely do, the shy confidence of their youngers. Neither lads nor lasses fear any bitterness of personal jealousy in granny's criticisms on the ground-plan and elevation of such castles in the air as it may please those sanguine architects to submit to her maturer judgment. The rule holds sometimes in "head," sometimes in "heart" affairs. I doubt whether in either it would hold on application to "male-grannies"—if the word may pass.

Unless it be presumptuous to hint advice to those from whom it is wiser, most times, to take it, I would here set down

that even mothers might not do amiss to take a leaf occasionally from granny's book in dealing with the "great girls" in the family. She too, doubtless, once rode her hobby, conventional, educational, or other. Mamma remembers it, its jerking paces and queer capers, and discomfiting effects, by times, on the temper of the young lady that must keep step therewith. Let her bethink herself that, as granny then was, she now herself is; and let her contrast granny's past habit with the present. She has dismounted hobby-nag long since, and put him into memory's stables. She has less fussiness, more readiness to make allowance, a larger trustfulness, grown of experience in your own case, dear mamma, whose girlish waywardness has ripened into such mellowness of noble womanhood:—she has, perhaps, a more patient fulness of calm hope. These may account for the force of her so gentle influence over your growing daughters. These might—if ever needed—supply correctives, as sweet as powerful, to your own all-eager—I will not write too eager—anxiety to guide and govern.

But I have been straggling from my Cicero. His second point is, that men thoughtlessly complain, "Old age brings failing health." He answers the complaint, as before, by example rather than by argument; he points to specimens of green old age, and then to others of old men making a manful stand against infirmities and pains of bodily decay. I meet him on this ground with confidence. I match his centenarian, Appius Claudius, with my Catherine Fitzgerald, that fine old Countess-dowager of Desmond, whom even the ribald rhymester allows to have

"Lived to the age of a hundred and ten,
And died of a fall from a cherry-tree,
then;

My!—What a frisky old girl!"

But the rhymester robs her of five-and-thirty winters and summers even so. Death took her in her hundred and forty-fifth year, just five years after travelling all the way from county Clare to London town, to demand of King

Jamie that he should right certain wrongs done her jointure in those disjointed Irish days. But cancel individuals on either side, as you would equivalents in working an equation. Put the question in a class sense, as between "gaffer and gammer," and, for all your stern hook-nosed Roman elder may be pupil to Stoics from Athens, he may well feel a freshman's bashfulness in presence of any aged matron, "mistress of arts," by virtue of maternity, in that academy of endurance wherein no man of them all matriculates. Stoics, forsooth! What very Cynic dare to sneer at "a pack of old women," if he will call them so, when once the talk has turned upon the power to smile off one's own countenance the sad lines which privation traces and pain etches in?

"Then," says the essayist, "this is the 'third flout which is put on old age, 'that it will rob us of delights.'"

His own retort is somewhat Irish—"Thank Heaven, it will; and, what is more, it won't." This, however, is morally coherent, if not logically. There be delights and delights. It was something that their philosophies taught these grey pagans to be thankful for escape from some of those that their hot youth had known. Well were it now for many, who can plead no "benefit of pagantry," could they too know that there be some delights whence, at whatever cost, escape is cheap.

It is a special glory of true womanhood—one that true manhood should be as proud to claim—that, such toils never having tangled it, no need exists for help of time or circumstance to burst them. I therefore pass by vicious pleasures, to assert that disentanglement from frivolous joys seems easier and more complete with elderly ladies than with their coeval gentlemen. Do you doubt it, reader? Count up upon your fingers the score of all those ancient fribbles you may chance to know, and see to which sex the majority belongs. Let social "special-constables" be sworn in to make—upon a day whose date they shall be sworn likewise to keep secret—a sudden swoop upon all fashionable promenades, all archery grounds, all

picnic fields, all ball-rooms, and the like resorts. They shall not apprehend one old coquette for every ten old dandies. Dear me! I was a dancing-man myself once, and in crowded sets have trodden on many a grandfather's toes, not on a single grandmother's, that I can call to mind. Though I must own, in honesty, how my fine old Countess of Desmond's chronicler sets forth that "historians confidently assert she had passed her hundredth year before she left off dancing and mixing in the gayest circles." Chroniclers have a terrible turn for gossip. Very likely 'twas but an occasional "saraband" in which her ladyship indulged, on some such rare solemnity as the presentation of some fair great-grand-daughter *débutante* at the Vice-regal court. People will exaggerate. Granny is not often caught at untimely diversions. And, be it noted, that her standing up in brocade and point-lace at Christmas-time, to lead off "Sir Roger de Coverly," shall not be debited against, but credited to her, as a condescending act of festive inauguration, and a symbolical linking of old-world joys with new. I do but skim by card-tables, not as reproving the good old lady's stately rubber at seasons, but as remarking how wisely chary, now-a-days, is granny of her own harmless recreation, lest the third generation misinterpret her to sanction sitting at green baize tables, to their harm. Cicero's old men ask, however, for "*talos et tesseras*," "draughts and backgammon." Granny, therefore, has classical warrant for sitting down to these.

But space begins to fail me; my pen-point, also, shrinks, even from kindest pleasantry, when it must touch the last topic of the philosophical old essayist.

"Remaineth a fourth cause, which seemeth most to keep in anguish and foreboding this age of ours—death's approach!"

Ah, noble-hearted elders of the twilight hours before the day-dawn that "brought life and immortality to light!"

Who reads, unmoved, your reasonings? What brave, ingenious, almost desperate, arguments were yours, to rob death of its sting, and to deny the grave a final victory! Not therefore in despite of you, but yet in humble, thankful, exultation, consistent with the tenderest sympathy, we contrast with your gropings after it our dear old granny's grasp of Life Eternal.

We will go see her die. Not under fretted roof of a patrician palace, but where the smoky rafters of a cottar's home bend close over the death-bed. By that bed-side is a three-legged table, no Delphic tripod, yet upon it lies a source of inspiration no pythonissa knew. A dog's-eared book, a battered pair of spectacles left in to mark the page, on which is stamped a story, which, "to the Greeks, was foolishness." It is a Book of Covenants, Old and New. This dying "grandmother Lois" has known their Scriptures "from a child," and studied them with an "unfeigned faith." She has read in their clauses a title to "an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled," such as philosophers and sages have often longed in vain to read on any scroll of truthful warrant.

How calm she faces death! "Mother Eunice" and the bairns that "greet for grannie" are shamed almost out of their tears. What great emotion shakes her? Some quiver of dread, thrilling her at last? Nay; for she scorns the propping pillows now, to sit upright as Deborah, beneath her palm-tree, judging Israel, by Bethel, in Mount Ephraim. See! she stretches out the wrinkled hands to bless two generations of her own offspring kneeling by. Then she clasps them, and the dim eyes look up; but the worn frame falls back.

"Gone!" cries Mother Eunice.

"Grannie! grannie!" sob the little ones.

Gone! where "there is neither male nor female," where both are found "equal with the angels, being the children of the Resurrection."

R. S. C. C.

AN APPLE-GATHERING.

I PLUCKED pink blossoms from mine apple-tree,
 And wore them all that evening in my hair;
 Then, in due season, when I went to see,
 I found no apples there.

With dangling basket all along the grass,
 As I had come, I went the selfsame track;
 My neighbours mocked me while they saw me pass
 So empty-handed back.

Lilian and Lilius smiled in trudging by;
 Their heaped-up basket teased me like a jeer;
 Sweet-voiced they sang beneath the sunset sky;
 Their mother's home was near.

Plump Gertrude passed me with her basket full;
 A stronger hand than hers helped it along;
 A voice talked with her thro' the shadows cool
 More sweet to me than song.

Ah! Willie, Willie, was my love less worth
 Than apples with their green leaves piled above?
 I counted rosiest apples on the earth
 Of far less worth than love.

So once it was with me you stooped to talk,
 Laughing and listening in this very lane:
 To think that by this way we used to walk
 We shall not walk again!

I let my neighbours pass me, ones and twos
 And groups: the latest said the night grew chill,
 And hastened; but I loitered; while the dews
 Fell fast, I loitered still.

CHRISTINA G. ROSSETTI.

TO MR. COBDEN AND OTHER PUBLIC MEN IN SEARCH OF WORK.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "TOM BROWN'S SCHOOL-DAYS,"
 "TOM BROWN AT OXFORD," ETC.

MR. COBDEN has been complaining of late that there are no great questions stirring in England into which a public man of any calibre can throw himself. Since the triumph of free trade, all politics have been getting mean and flat, till there is no party question left worth fighting for. The peace agitation was a failure; people wouldn't answer the whip. The would-be reform agitation doesn't seem likely to turn out much better. What can a statesman find to do?

It is not Mr. Cobden alone who takes this view of home-politics. One hears a good deal of the same kind from men very different from him in all respects. The difficulty of finding some line worth taking, some subject which will really lay hold of them, in politics, seems to weigh down many of our younger public men. And really, when one comes to think over the questions which have chiefly occupied Parliament of late, one cannot help acknowledging that they have some excuse for carrying on their

representative duties in a listless and perfunctory manner, or dropping down into mere partisans. When Church-rates, the Galway Contract, or the claims and grievances of the reformed borough of Wakefield, or such so-called privileges of Parliament as have been debated this session, are the home questions on which they are invited by their leaders to fix their attention and expend their energies, one cannot wonder at the spread of a belief amongst public men that they are fallen on a day of little things. Such a belief with ambitious men must end in a compromise with themselves, and a quiet falling in to the Indian-file of their own party, which course they reasonably enough hope will bring them at last, as leaders drop off, to the front places. Those who are not ambitious will turn their attention to other matters—to literature, to farming, to sporting—satisfied that the country is fairly prosperous, and is likely to go on reasonably well without any active help from them.

I am now speaking specially of home politics. In foreign and colonial affairs, the struggle of the continental nations for freedom, the crisis in Turkey, the great cause which is being tried in America, the future of India and Australia, are big enough and serious enough matters to satisfy any man, and are, no doubt, intimately connected with the well-being and well-doing of England. But we can only treat them as onlookers; and for one Englishman who has the bent or the opportunity for studying or taking any action in these matters, there are a hundred who would apply themselves to home questions. Foreign questions, however great, do not deeply move us as a nation. It would be well if they moved us more deeply; but there is the simple fact—they do not.

And so politics are getting for many of us less and less interesting every day. We Englishmen, the most intensely political, take us all through, of any nation on the face of the earth, are wearying of Parliamentary debates, and actually, at times, find ourselves

almost questioning whether that august assembly is not a much over-rated institution. I have no doubts on the point myself, and believe that the House of Commons has a good stroke of work yet to do in the world. But, to go back to the point from which we started: Is it true that there is no great home-question which is forcing itself up, and asking to be solved in our time, and proving itself more and more inexorable every day—a question which cannot any longer be put aside, but must be met with all the wisdom we are masters of?

If we insist on looking through Parliamentary or press spectacles, we may answer, No, and congratulate ourselves that there is nothing to be done at home but to keep the Volunteers up to the mark, to go on steadily with a little tinkering at education and law-reform, and then to enjoy and make the most of the wonderful accumulation of intellectual and physical wealth which is piling itself up on every side of us. In order to do this as it should be done, we must enter into the spirit of self-jubilation which meets us so often in the leading journals: we must be able to thank God that we are not as other nations, even as these Italians or Americans, and, looking serenely and condescendingly out of our remarkable little islands, to sing:—

“On safety’s rock I sits and sees
The shipwreck of mine enemies.”

But, even limiting ourselves thus, we shall not wholly succeed in keeping out a sort of uncomfortable consciousness that there is a screw loose down somewhere below the water-line. Even persons in office will allude to something not quite right down below, in a parenthetical kind of way; as for instance—Mr. Lowe, in his speech on education (July 11), when he says, “I really think that the schoolmaster should be taught some political economy in these days of strikes, so that the person who is looked up to next to the clergyman in his village should be able to give some sensible opinion on those melancholy contests about wages.” The very para-

graphs in our daily and weekly oracles, which have been, for months, week after week, telling us "that all the great builders' workshops will be full of first-rate men by Saturday night next at latest"—"that the lazy demagogues who have been working on simple men for their own selfish purposes are losing the confidence of their constituents"—will not let us quite enjoy the good of all our labour which we take under the sun all the days of our life. And, if we will use our own eyes and ears, we shall certainly not get easier.

I have somehow rushed clean into the middle of my subject before I meant to do so. But it is better as it is: and I will now ask Mr. Cobden (at least I would if I had the chance), and I do ask every man who reads this, whether this open state of war—almost chronic now—between the employers of labour and the men, is not a big-enough question for every English statesman and every English man to spend his whole force upon. It is of no use trying to shut our eyes any longer. We have shirked facing this difficulty too long already, and, as usual, it has only been getting worse to meet. There is no set of words which makes us more angry and impatient than "strike," "trades-union," and their kindred. The ideas they call up are simply annoying. Have we not heard enough of them? Shall we never have done with these miserable squabbles?

No, most assuredly never, until some just method of settlement has been found—until we have not only found, but are resolutely holding on to and following the thread which is to lead us out of the labyrinth. Jonah, in old times, when he was set to a work for which he had no stomach, turned away from it, and tried to get out of going through with it, just as men and nations have been doing ever since—as we are now doing by this strike question. He found it all no good at last, and went to Nineveh and did his work. And so all men and nations must do. As to us English of this day, the hook will be put in our noses, and the bridle in our

lips, and we shall be brought round, and up, again and again, to this "strike question," and "relations of capital and labour," till we have fairly taken off our coats, and set to work upon it in real earnest.

We have here, then, in the heart of England, and spreading away into remote districts, a civil war raging—a civil war as certainly as there is now civil war in the United States, though, thank God, the weapons are not the same. This is the first fact which we should do well to get thoroughly worked into our understandings. The second important fact is, that this war is getting every year, ay, every day, more determined, more wide-spread, more dangerous. I can remember the time, not many years back, when it was in its guerilla stage. Then strikes were almost always local matters, fought out in a short time, in a small ring. Now a strike in London, Lancashire, Yorkshire, or elsewhere, is felt over the whole kingdom, and in the colonies. The masters are organized, and the men are organized, and those organizations are ever extending and perfecting themselves. The whole of the masters in some trades are in union; several of the men's unions have branches in almost every great town of the United Kingdom, and in Australia and Canada. And these two great hosts under arms are here, at our doors, amongst ourselves—always in the quiet districts keenly watching one another; always in action at some point.

Mr. Cobden is a thorough-going peace man. Surely he might find full exercise for all his powers of making peace here. And he is perhaps in all the kingdom the man who could do most in this way. He has the unbounded confidence of the masters, and he has been a master himself, so that he must thoroughly know their side of the case. He is a master no longer, so that he has no present material interests involved; and he would be more likely than any other man of his weight with the masters to be accepted by the men as an umpire. But there is room for fifty such men as Mr. Cobden. Every one

of us may have a chance of doing something; at any rate every one of us should take the trouble for himself to get at something like the rights of the case. No man with the least pretension to statesmanship can neglect it any longer. Of that I am very sure. Yet so little is done or thought about the matter yet, that, whilst the war is actually raging round us who live in London, the masons and the bricklayers are on strike, and I believe that not one man in one thousand really knows what they are fighting for.

Before trying to answer this question myself, I must just call the reader's attention for a few moments to the contemplation of an eminently popular philanthropic association.

If we may judge by the annual printed reports which our innumerable societies of one kind or another for the regeneration of the world put forth, there is no one of the younger of them more vigorous in these days than the "Early Closing Association." In the report for 1861 there is a list of donations and subscriptions since 1852 of twenty-seven pages in length; and yet it boldly acknowledges a debt of 500*l.*, and appeals for special subscriptions to liquidate the same. Its patrons are three well-known noblemen, and four bishops. The names of its vice-presidents (many of them those of well-known men who would certainly disagree amongst themselves on most questions) fill two long columns. There are no less than twenty-one eminent physicians and surgeons on its medical staff. What their duties may be cannot be gathered from the report; but we have a right to assume that from a sanitary point of view they approve the objects of the Association. The great ladies of London have given in their adhesion to its principles. Four duchesses, thirteen marchionesses, forty-three countesses, ten viscountesses, and other ladies, titled and untitled, so numerous that motives of economy prevent the Association from publishing the list, have publicly and voluntarily pledged themselves to abstain from shopping after two o'clock on Saturdays.

The Association lays about on all sides, holds crowded meetings of fashionable folk, of West End tradesmen, City tradesmen, and of tradesmen in all parts of the suburbs; appeals confidently to the press and the pulpit for help, and gets it; is all things to all men, and works indiscriminately with Sabbatarians, Volunteers, Peace Society men, Christian young men, and many who would, I fear, scarcely claim that name. In short, as above stated, it is a most vigorous and prosperous society, and one of those whose principles and objects have been almost universally accepted and commended.

Those objects, as stated on the first page of the report in large type, are—

I. The abridgment of the hours of labour in all departments of industrial life, where necessary, especially on Saturday nights.

II. The adoption of a Saturday half-holiday, where practicable.

III. The early payment of wages.

IV. The rescue of shopkeepers and their assistants from the drudgery of Sunday trading.

The objects of this fashionable and popular association are just those of another association, the doings of which are at present much in men's mouths, but which is neither fashionable nor popular. The committee of this latter association sits daily at the Sun, in Mason Street—a queer little thoroughfare, running out of the Westminster Road, at the back of Astley's Amphitheatre. There are no ladies in this association, or lords either; nor does the name of a single bishop, or other great person, appear anywhere in connexion with it, or with the committee which represents it and sits in Mason Street—except, by the way, that of the Duke of Buccleugh; and he, far from approving or helping forward the views of the association, is bent on quite another course. The association, in short, is the Society of Masons of the United Kingdom, who are working an early closing movement in their way—in doing which, according to their lights, they have disagreed, amongst others, with

the master-builder who has contracted to build the Duke's splendid new house overlooking the Thames; and the Duke is said to have declared, without attempting to hear both sides, that he will support his builder, and wait ten years sooner than he should yield. It is to be hoped the men will make allowances for dukes, and return good for evil by building his house as soon as the present dispute is over.

But, to return to the two associations having this common object, why is it that, wherever one goes, one finds the one applauded and the other condemned in the middle and upper classes?

It is true that we have run into great extravagances in the line of societies for the improvement of all mankind except ourselves, and have thus got into the way of liking to help people, and being somewhat jealous of their attempts to help themselves. But there is enough of English feeling amongst us still to make us like, in a general way, to see independent men standing up for their own rights, if they don't interfere with our interests. Here is a body of men doing this resolutely, quietly, legally (for, be it remembered, there has not been a single case of assault or intimidation since the men went out). We approve, and are ourselves advocating, the principles on which their claims are founded; and yet all the high-class journals, with the exception of the *Spectator* and the *Daily News*, speak of them and their cause with monstrous bitterness and unfairness, and nine out of ten accept their statements without inquiry.

But what claim are these masons, who are fighting the battle for the whole of the building trades, putting forward, which is not included in the "objects" of the Early Closing Association? The present single point in issue is, whether the old and universal custom of a fixed working day of ten hours shall be retained or not. The ten hours' day is from 6 A. M. to 5.30 P. M.—out of which the men get one hour and a half for meals. The circuit within which they work is six miles from St. Paul's; so

that many of them have to walk four and five miles to their work and home again, thus making their "day" away from home fourteen or fifteen hours. They find this already too much, and they say that, under the hour system which the masters are trying to force on them, (besides losing positive advantages in the shape of extra pay and privileges, which are serious enough, but beside the simple question) they will be driven to work even longer hours, whenever it suits the master's convenience. They may be mistaken; but, assuming them to be so, is or is not this day's work enough for a man? If it is, why are the men not to be supported? Take the masters' own statements. They say that they will not try to make their men work longer under the hour system, and that their only object in the change was one of conciliation. They have wholly failed in their object of conciliation; so, if they do not really mean to work longer time under the hour system, they can gain nothing by insisting on the change. All other questions are virtually compromised, for the present at any rate. They only embitter the struggle by prolonging it.

They would probably answer, "Yes; we might give up the hour system, if we thought it would end the dispute; but the men have not really given up their claim for a nine hours' day instead of ten hours for the old wages." I believe that the men have *bona fide* given up that claim for the present; but, suppose they have not, what then? The claim is in exact accordance with the public feeling of the country. The country is quite ready to pay for it in the building trades (as it has done without grumbling in many others); why should the masters be so anxious to protect us? It is not easy to see, unless indeed it be, as the men say, that they have already discounted our readiness, and have been charging larger prices for brickwork, &c., without sharing the rise with their workmen.

But there is another way of accounting for the masters' resolution. They may be really meaning to break down

the trades' unions, as they have of late been exhorted to do in the *Times* and other journals. And this I take to be their real meaning; and the fear of trades' unions, which have been always held up as a bugbear to us, has, in fact, turned away all the sympathy of the public from the men's side.

As to breaking up trades' unions, we may as well save ourselves the trouble of talking and thinking about it. The thing cannot be done. They are spread all over the kingdom. They are the strongest organized bodies amongst us. They include and faithfully represent a large majority in numbers of the largest class of the community. As a rule, the best workmen and best men in every trade belong to them; and, of the minority of good men who do not, you will find almost all—even those who have quarrelled with them—admitting that they do good, and are absolutely necessary to the independence of the men in the present state of things.

But, if trades' unions cannot be broken up, cannot they be improved? Surely. They are improving themselves, and that rapidly; but they are by no means what they should be yet. How can we help them?

Teach the schoolmasters political economy, says Mr. Lowe. By all means. It is just one of the things which schoolmasters and pupils need most. But, what political economy will you teach? *Quis custodiet ipsos custodes?* Who shall instruct our schoolmasters, and, through them, our working people? Shall we set those who believe themselves most able to teach—the professors of the pure gospel of free trade—to the work? The few real truths which they have brought out are already fully acknowledged by their proposed pupils; and, on the deep questions which these feel and know to affect their own daily lives, and not to have been solved in any even approximately satisfactory manner, what sort of teaching are they likely to get from this quarter?

They will be told probably first of all that their unions are wrong in principle. They see and know that these unions

have supported them and theirs in sickness and sorrow, have enabled them to maintain their independence against the pressure of masters and foremen. They will be told that the unions must ruin every trade in which they are strong. They see and know that in every trade where there are no unions, or where the unions have been broken down and are feeble (*e.g.* agricultural labour, the slop-tailors in the East of London, the Northampton shoemakers, &c. &c.), there wages are the lowest, and the work-people in the greatest misery. Very probably masters may have a different tale to tell in these same trades. Moses and Son may make large fortunes in them, but the men somehow obstinately refuse to be thankful on this account.

They will be told probably that, when wages fall in a trade, the evil cures itself, for the workmen will leave it. They see and know that, instead of this result, the actual fact is that here in England when wages fall, men do not and cannot leave their trades, but have to bring in their women and children to help to earn the old wage—with what result let the neighbourhood of the Minories and Spitalfields say.

They will be warned against improvidence, against marrying, and so glutting the labour-market by over-production of what it is the fashion to call "hands." They will point at their masters, and ask whether *they* are not over-producing in every direction, shouldering one another at every turn, and recklessly glutting every market which opens to them. They will maintain that, at any rate, there is more to be said for marriage than for hasting to get rich by unwise means. They will tell their would-be teachers to apply this doctrine first at home.

They will be told that it is contrary to the doctrine of free trade that they should try to limit the number of apprentices. They will answer that they are doing no more than their betters in the learned professions, and that it does not lie in the mouths of those who warn them against glutting the labour-market in another way to urge against them this attempt of theirs to limit the supply.

They will be told that "buy cheap and sell dear" is the eternal law of trade. They will answer that they have suffered too much already under it to believe in it, and will cry out for a "just price," a "fair day's wages for a fair day's work." This has been their war-cry as long as I can remember, and a nobler one it would be not easy to suggest to them.

They will be told that an enlightened selfishness in each individual works the good of all. They will answer that they have never found it so in their line of life, and don't want to have that doctrine get into their unions.

In short, not to go on multiplying instances, the accepted political economy—that "law of the State's household," which sets before itself the accumulation of capital as its highest result—is a law which for them leads to bankruptcy, and they will not listen to its professors. But I know that they are not only ready, but most anxious, for teaching on the matters which Political Economy should deal with if it were true to its name. If any reader doubts this, I can only ask him to attend some of their trades' meetings, or to buy and read a number or two of the few papers which really represent them, such as *The Workman*, price 1d., published at 335, Strand; or, better still, to get some of their trade reports and circulars and study them. There is a prospectus of a trade journal at present circulating amongst the working classes which will show in a few words what subjects are really occupying them. The name of this journal is to be, *Weekly Wages, the Organ of Associated Labour*. The prospectus sets out shortly the want felt by the working classes of a newspaper to represent them truly. "Fair-play," it states, "is all that labour needs, and all that was ever demanded for it; and the new journal—projected by working men, conducted and written by working men—will endeavour to place this fact beyond controversy.

"It will discuss rates of wages—raises—and reductions of wages—strikes—lock-outs—the hours of labour—nine-

hours' movements—the health of working men—the education of working men—trades usages—the character of working men—what they want and what they don't want—passing words to their friends and their enemies—hints to apprentices—and explanations to employers.

"For the wars of political faction, or the personal strife of party, it will care little and say less.

"Secretaries of trade societies, who have useful matters to report, will be able to show to the various trades through the columns of a trade journal what has been done by each society in every town; what is doing—and what might be done—for the general advantage.

"At present, when trade disputes arise, men and societies know too little of each other's doings, and, losing the help which could be had if the trade were known and understood, are disheartened by unmerited failure. This fighting in the dark is the Inkerman of labour, where victory is rare, and often costs more than it is worth.

"Lastly: the new journal will keep a sharp eye on that latest proof of working-class capacity and enterprise—co-operation. It will watch and aid the great experiment to bring labour and capital together, and will do what it can to induce money and work to make a wedding of it. It will not seek to prolong a war with capital; the day of such a weak impolicy is past. It will aim to enter into an alliance with it."

These are not wild words, but very serious and sober words. There is nothing in them of violence, or bluster, or blind hatred to other classes, or desire to divide other people's goods, or any of the weaknesses often attributed to the class from which they come by those who fear without knowing anything about it. They let us pretty much into the confidence of the men by whom and for whom they were written. I hope to return to some of the topics which are mentioned in this prospectus.

REMINISCENCE

THE south wind wars against the cold
 With spears of silver rain ;
 The trickling mountain-steeps have rolled
 Their garments on the plain.

With thousand thousand violet eyes
 Awakening earth surveys
 The long unwonted light that lies
 On all the woodland ways,

And blithe the chanting waters haste
 And sparkle to the deep ;
 But what, O earth ! repays the waste
 And ravage of thy sleep ?

'Twas morning ; from the chill dead sky
 Faint gleams of lustre broke,
 Like last gold leaves hung tremblingly
 Upon a haggard oak.

Like ghosts by tombs, the willows white
 Stood weeping by the yew ;
 Her dark and pinching mantle tight
 The moody cypress drew.

There, bowed between the gravestone flat
 And column-crowning urn,
 We loth and lingering gave thee that
 Thou never wilt return.

Then prophesy with blade and bud
 The blossom and the grain ;
 Recall thy singer to the wood,
 And bid him build again ;

Thou canst not charm us to forget
 The captive of thy mould,
 Or pay us with a violet
 For aught thou hast in hold.